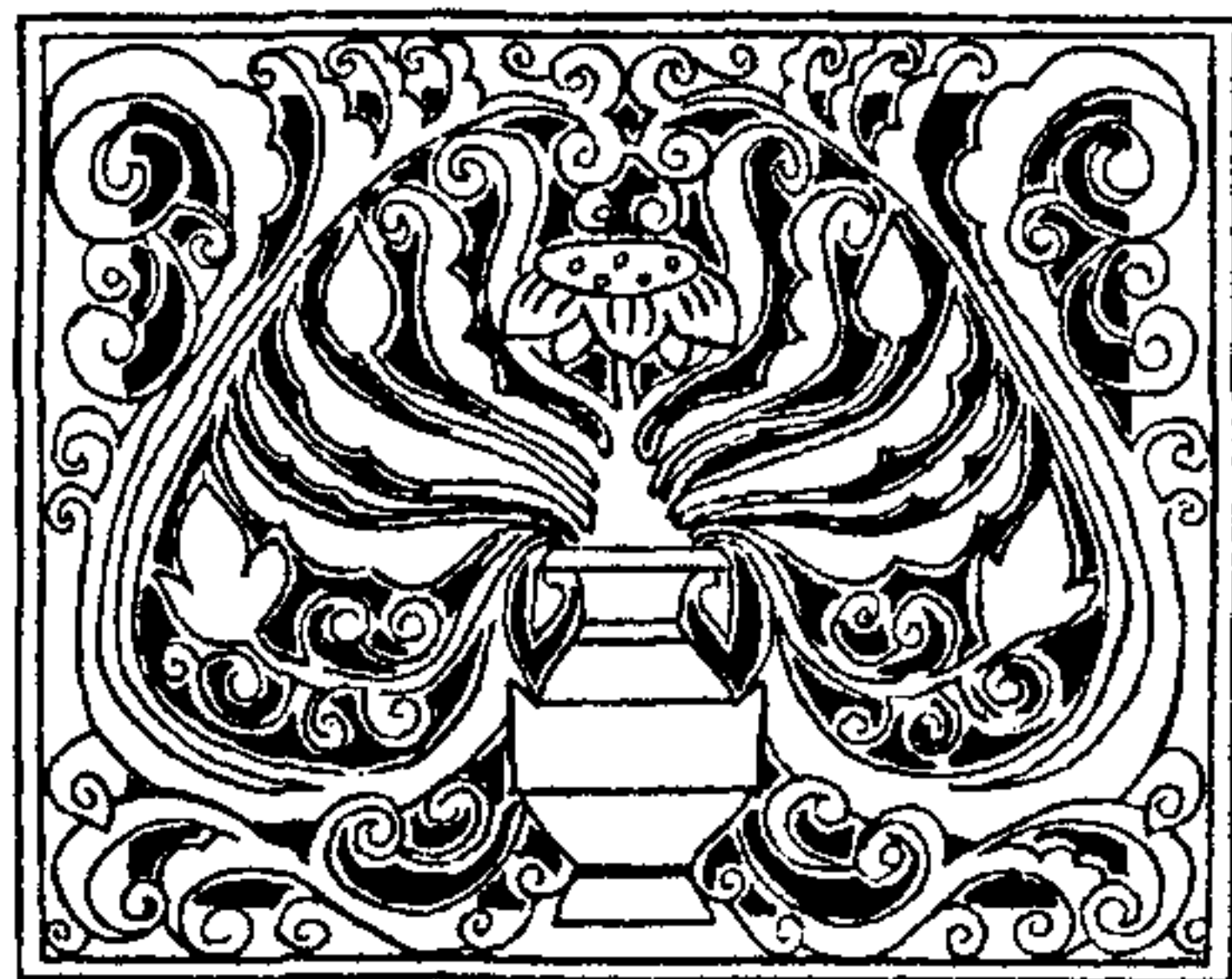




PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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Publication Office
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AUGUST 1997

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उत्तिष्ठत
जाग्रत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

Vol. 102

AUGUST 1997

No. 8

Divine Wisdom

IMAGE WORSHIP VERSUS SEEING GOD IN ALL

(Sage Kapila to his mother Devahūti)

अहं सर्वेषु भूतेषु भूतात्मावस्थितः सदा।
तमवज्ञाय मां मर्त्यः कुरुतेऽर्चाविडम्बनम्॥

I abide in all beings as their innermost soul. Disregarding My presence within them, men make a show of worshipping Me through images.

यो मां सर्वेषु भूतेषु सन्तमात्मानमीश्वरम्।
हित्वार्चा भजते मौढ्याद्भस्मन्येव जुहोति सः॥

If one disregards Me present in all as their soul and Lord but ignorantly offers worship only to images, such worship is as ineffective as sacrificial offerings made in ashes.

द्विषतः परकाये मां मानिनो भिन्नदर्शिनः।
भूतेषु बद्धवैरस्य न मनः शान्तिमृच्छति॥

A man who persecutes Me residing in others, who is proud and haughty, who looks upon God as the other—such a person will never attain to peace of mind.

अहमुच्चावचैर्द्रव्यैः क्रिययोत्पन्नयानघे।
नैव तुष्येऽर्चितोऽर्चायां भूतग्रामावमानिनः॥

If a man disregards and persecutes fellow beings, but worships Me in images with numerous rituals and rich offerings, I am not at all pleased with him for proffering such worship.

Ramakrishna Movement: Ideas and Ideals-II

Sri Ramakrishna's life as well as the life of Holy Mother and those of the direct disciples of the Master were expressive of great harmony. We have seen earlier that the life of Sri Ramakrishna harmonized the apparently conflicting religions into a harmony requiring of the religious aspirant only longing, sincerity and absence of dogmatism. In him was revived once more the long-forgotten ideal of the Vedas, 'Ekam sad-viprā bahudhā vadanti, Truth is One; sages call It by different names'. The truth of this utterance is very obvious from a study of his life. But there are minute incidents in his life from which other forms of harmony and synthesis emerge. It was the keen perception of Swami Vivekananda that brought out these jewels in a language and form that is comprehensible to ordinary people like us. As Swamiji said:

Ramakrishna was such a harmony. Such beings are few and far between; but keeping him and his teachings as the ideal, we can move on. And if amongst us, each one may not individually attain to that perfection, still we may get it collectively by counteracting, equipoising, adjusting, and fulfilling one another. This would be *harmony* by a number of persons and a decided advance on all other forms and creeds.¹

One must remember that each member in the team has some meritorious features as well as some deficiencies which are compensated for by others in the group. As is said in the well-known poem, 'The Mountain and the Squirrel', 'All is well and wisely

put/ For, if I cannot carry mountains on my back/ Neither can you crack a nut!' The mountain and the squirrel have their own deficiencies, no doubt, but they have their capabilities as well, and *together* the mountain and the squirrel can accomplish the task of carrying the forest on the back and cracking a nut. The capabilities, and not the deficiencies, add up. Every lamp casts its own shadow, no doubt, but many lamps placed together shed light all around. Thus, in conjoint work it is necessary to appreciate the fulfilling complementary part played by another of the group. That is indeed the basis of performing organized work. As Swamiji said:

...organisation means division of labour. Each does his own part, and all the parts taken together express an ideal of harmony.²

Synthesis of Yogas

Normally, people understand by yoga, a union of the *jivatman* (individual soul) with the *Paramatman* (Supreme Soul). And the four yogas are well known: Jnana, Bhakti, Karma, and Raja yoga. Yet people have certain misconceptions: whether one yoga is superior to another, and which particular yoga is suitable for a person of a given temperament. In such an atmosphere, we may well leave out of consideration even an attempt at their being harmonized in the life of any one individual. In Sri Ramakrishna's life, however, was noticed a wonderfully harmonious reconciliation between such apparently incompatible methods as Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and Yoga.

Speaking on this aspect Swami Shivananda, a direct disciple of Sri Rama-

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 4, p.356. [Hereafter C.W.]

2. C.W., vol. 6, p. 295.

krishna, said at the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission Convention in 1926 as follows:

A man who held the highest Samadhi in the palm of his hand, also melted into tears at the mere mention of the name of God. He who had realized Truth by following the intricacies of the Yoga system was also found undergoing the pain of slow crucifixion in the midst of tremendous activities for distributing the fruits of his own realizations among fit recipients. This all-sided man appealed irresistibly to the mind of his disciple [Swami Vivekananda], who clearly saw that the future world, reborn and rejuvenated, must bear the stamp of his guru's genius.

Again, looking from an ordinary standpoint we find Swamiji, the great Acharya that he was, giving us the ideal of an organization wherefrom its members will get the greatest facilities of an integral realization, rich and full in its conception and attainment. The aspirant will have to combine in his Sadhana elements of the four accepted paths—Jnana, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga, laying greater stress on a particular process according to his predominant temperament.... Thus we shall presently see among the ways prescribed for the members of the Math a wonderful synthesis of meditation, worship, study and work.... Humanity has never before seen another life like that of Sri Ramakrishna synthesizing the highest ideals of knowledge, devotion, work and Yoga. Those only who mould their lives after the perfect ideal of Sri Ramakrishna's character can be truly said to represent the ideas of the Math. Therefore, Swamiji enjoined that the special aim of this Math would be the formation of character by combining the above-mentioned four paths, and that the spiritual exercises that would bring about such a synthesis would alone be accepted as the Sadhana of this Math. 'Therefore,' he said emphatically, 'everyone must bear in mind that a man who shows the slightest deficiency in any one of the above-mentioned ways has not been properly cast in the

mould of Sri Ramakrishna's life.'

...simple discrimination or study of the scriptures ends in mere intellectual gymnastics, dry and insipid, if it does not express its conclusions in terms of the actualities of life. Similarly, devotion degenerates into meaningless and often dangerous sentimentalism if it dissociates itself from discrimination and work. To know Truth, to feel its presence in the innermost recesses of one's heart and to realize its expression all around—these are but three aspects of the same highest divine realization. His ideal monk was one who would be now absorbed in meditation and the next moment be prepared to explain the difficult intricacies of the Shastras. The same monk again would with equal zeal cultivate the field and sell the produce of it in the market, carrying it on his own head.³

Work uninspired by devotion to God and unaccompanied by meditation, discrimination and other spiritual practices, degenerates into a mere social service activity. Such a mechanical work, not attuned to a higher conception of life, results in bondage. It creates also mental hurdles in the form of such doubts as what is the utility in being unselfish when the whole world is steeped in selfishness. Hands can exert for the desired end only when the vision is clarified and the heart finds facilities for its full expression. So, Swamiji wanted mankind to develop the heart to feel intensely for the misery of mankind, to develop the head to conceive ways and means for the alleviation of misery, and to develop the hands (will) so that the ideas may be implemented even in the face of opposition.

Swami Vivekananda himself designed the seal of the Ramakrishna Mission which bears out the idea of the combination of yogas resulting in the all-round development of the individual so that with a perfect instrument one could strive for attaining the vision of the *Paramatman*. The incident which brings out the significance of the seal

3. *Prabuddha Bharata*, 1926, p. 145.

is revealed in the following narrative:

...Swamiji had the design which he had sketched for the seal of the Ramakrishna Mission brought, showed it to Ranada Babu and asked his opinion on it. It depicted a lake in which a lotus blossomed, and there was a swan, and the whole was encircled by a serpent. Ranada Babu at first could not catch the significance of it and asked Swamiji to explain. Swamiji said, 'The wavy waters in the picture are symbolic of Karma; the lotus, of Bhakti; and the rising-sun, of Jnana. The encircling serpent is indicative of Yoga and the awakened Kundalini Shakti, while the sun in the picture stands for the Paramatman (Supreme Self). Therefore the idea of the picture is that by the union of Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, the vision of the Paramatman is obtained.'⁴

It should be clearly understood that Swamiji recommended this synthesis of yogas not only for members of the Order but

also for the modern man in general. Said he:

Such a unique personality—a synthesis of Jnana, Yoga, Bhakti and Karma in their utmost perfection, did never appear before in the human race. He alone is a true disciple and follower of Sri Ramakrishna whose character is similarly perfect in all respects. The formation of such a perfect character is the aim of this age, and everyone should strive for that alone with all his might.

In stating this Swamiji had closely followed in the footsteps of Sri Ramakrishna who also used to prescribe the same ideal of synthesis of Jnana, Yoga, Bhakti and Karma for householders also. In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, we find that Sri Ramakrishna advises M. (i) to repeat God's name... (Bhakti Yoga), (ii) to discriminate between the Real and the unreal... (Jnana Yoga), (iii) to meditate, ...withdraw within oneself, to a secluded corner or to the forest

(Dhyana Yoga), and (iv) to do all duties but keep the mind on God... (Karma Yoga).⁵

Harmony between personal salvation and good of the world

There normally arises a common dispute between people who are engaged in spiritual practices and those engaged in leading a purely worldly life. What is the good of personal salvation as far as society is concerned? How does it benefit society whether some individual realizes his true nature or not? The counter questions also exist. Can one prove that the good of the world is in itself an end to be sought? Is the perception of the senses at all to be believed? What is the proof that the world exists as we perceive it through the senses? The utilitarians seek the utility in dedicating life to an unseen God and the man of spirit underlines the futility of any connection with the world as it is perceived by us. In the atmosphere of such a conflict, the perception of a harmony between these apparently conflicting viewpoints only Vivekananda could have. Says Swami Shivananda in his speech at the Convention:

As the very basis of the Math we find the following words of Swamiji. 'This Math is established,' said he, 'for the attainment of one's own liberation as well as to get equipped for the amelioration of the world in all possible ways by following the path laid down by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva.... At the very outset we find that he has linked up into a single purpose two apparently diverse ideals, viz., one's own liberation and the service for the welfare of the world. Through this Math he has sought to weld together the ideals of renunciation and service, work and worship, which, as generally people believe, cannot possibly combine without proving detrimental to each other. According to his ideal, the attainment of personal liberation need not necessarily contradict the dedication of life to the service of



4. C.W., vol. 7, p. 204.

5. *Meditation and Spiritual Life* (Bangalore: Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, 1979), pp. 278–9.

humanity, nor should the latter in its highest aspect be thought of as apart from the activities of the man who is eager to pierce through the mist that has covered the effulgent Truth lying within his own self. If the highest illumination aims at nothing short of effacing all distinctions between the individual soul and the universal Soul, and if its ideal be to establish a total identity of one's own self with Brahman existing everywhere, then it naturally follows that the highest spiritual experience of the aspirant cannot but lead him to a state of exalted self-dedication to the welfare of all. He makes the last divine sacrifice by embracing the universe after transcending its limitations which are the outcome of ignorance.⁶

Renunciation and Service

Swami Vivekananda once said, 'The national ideals of India are Renunciation and Service. Intensify her in those channels, and the rest will take care of itself.' He emphasized that this Vedantic ideal lived by the recluse *outside* the pale of society, could be practised even *within* the precincts of one's hearth and home, and *applied* to one's daily scheme of life. It is not that renunciation is the ideal of the sannyasin merely nor that service is the role of the householder only and should be limited to the *pañca-mahāyajñas*. Both the householder and the sannyasin model their life on the basis of renunciation and service, which are the national ideals of India.

Whatever might be the avocation of a man, he should realize that it is God alone who manifests Himself as the world and created beings. What we are called upon to do is to renounce the world view held by us out of ignorance and, covering the world with the face of God, serve Him through worship. Whether we are in possession of that realization or not, the truth realized by the ancient seers is not negated. Instead of working with the world and getting entan-

gled in a mass of misconceived ideas and concepts based on wrong premises, we should from the very beginning try to relate ourselves to the world in the right perspective. Service rendered in a spirit of worship of the Divine would therefore naturally lead to the purification of the mental stuff by removing the last traces of selfishness and result in the realization of one's identity with the ultimate Reality. Thus, this idea represents a synthesis between the ideal of renunciation and service which not only underlines a course of moral discipline, contemplation, and study but also a life of self-dedication at the altar of humanity perceived as divine for the attainment of the highest end of human existence. This ideal of worship of Jiva (the embodied being) as Shiva (God) is thus an important cornerstone of the activities carried on by the Ramakrishna Mission.

Need for Collective Work

There are other guidelines, far too numerous to list in which one should be grounded to ensure that the works are performed in the right spirit. Let us take for instance the three P's: *Purity, Patience and Perseverance*. Even as one begins any undertaking one begins to realize the importance of absolute purity which encompasses a greater field than mere chastity in thought, word and deed. On the need for patience and forbearance, the saying, 'be patient like the tree' is apt. The strength of forbearance is borne out in the life of Sita. Perseverance has a great role to play in achieving any accomplishment and it helps in spiritual progress. *To be not agitated by the world and not to agitate the world into waves is a trait that one must possess*. But this requires that one be anchored to a huge and calm ocean-like buffer into which the dashing river enters with no trace of its fury left.

Swami Vivekananda has pointed out time and again that three things are necessary to make every man great, every nation great: 1. *Conviction of the powers of goodness,*

6. *Prabuddha Bharata*, 1926, p. 145.

2. *Absence of jealousy and suspicion, and*
 3. *Helping all who are trying to be and do good.*
 These qualities reflect in one's actions and behaviour towards others. Conjoined action is another feature that is almost absent owing to a lack of *obedience*. The ego is so blown up that people are bubbling to say so much and have so little patience or humility to listen to sane advice. *A dangerous sin one should guard oneself from is anger.* Sri Ramakrishna advises his disciples and the entire humanity by saying that, 'Anger is a deadly sin'. The greatness of *simplicity, of there not being any variance between the speech and the thinking, can never be exaggerated. Punctuality, keeping a proper account of all moneys received and spent, and the need to assign the right job to the right man* were stressed by Swamiji as being very important. To keep the ideology bright before one's mental eye so that there is a sense of collective work and unity of approach, some regular reading from the lives of the great inspirers of the Movement is necessary. Swami Vivekananda had often stressed the need for an organized effort to tackle immense problems and had pointed out the deficiency of the Indians in this regard. He had therefore in very many situations specifically mentioned how one should perform work in an organized way.⁷

Above all, there is the need for a *willingness to serve*. Many have not the means to serve but are endowed with a heart as vast as the sky and as deep as the ocean. There are also persons in whom the means to serve humanity lies unutilized for want of an all-inclusive outlook. This lack of fellow-feeling that finds a vivid expression in the miser has earned for him the name of being the greatest donor, for he neither spends his money on others nor even on himself so much so that when life ebbs out he leaves behind all his belongings for others to enjoy. There is therefore the need to feel one with humanity, and instead of asking, 'What can I do?',

be a hero and ask, 'What can I *not* do?'

An incident, though trivial it may appear, occurred one day in front of the reputed Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Centenary College at Rahara. Two monks were walking towards the college when a bystander approached one of them and narrated his problem. He had come across a child, an intelligent one, who had nobody to support him and thus for want of help the boy would not blossom into a bright young man. He wanted to know how to get the boy admitted to the Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home, an orphanage catering to the all-round growth of orphan, destitute and backward male children. The answer was quite simple and so one of the monks told the gentleman how to go about it. The monk then fell silent realizing that the other monk by his side was his senior and that it would be profitable to hear what he had to say. The other monk then stepped forward and said that even a thousand monks were not sufficient to solve the problems of the world. 'Suppose,' he said, 'you include the boy as a brother or a son in your own family and cater to his needs....' What is needed is a change in perception. That would be the way to rise to the needs of the country. There is thus the need for an all-inclusive approach. Even as there is the need to exert oneself for coming up, there is also the need to exert to raise others in our neighbourhood. Holy Mother's advice, 'make the whole world your own', can therefore never be over-emphasized.

The problems are growing world-wide in geometric progression and the means to combat it are growing in arithmetic progression. Oftentimes there is also set-back owing to a lack of vision. Such a situation is going to prove ineffective. What is needed is to perfect the means and find out a more rapid way of strengthening the means and directing one's effort, however feeble, along the line of thinking of the ancient masters. One is

(Continued on page 607)

7. See *Vedanta Kesari*, June 1996, p. 218.



The Inaugural Celebration of the Centenary of the Ramakrishna Mission

SWAMI SUNIRMALANANDA

We are grateful to Swami Sunirmalananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, for preparing this report, and to Sri Sujit Bhuanik, Librarian, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, for the photographs in this issue.

There was once a huge mango tree. People enjoyed eating its fruits year after year. One day the tree began to show signs of withering. Someone said, 'Peel off the leaves.' That was done, but to no avail. Another said, 'Prune its branches.' That too was done. The tree, however, kept withering. A witch-hunter said, 'It needs some incantations. A ghost is consuming the vital energy of this tree.' That too was accomplished with due pomp, but with no betterment. Then came the scientific thinker. Said he, 'Fools that you are, inject medicines through its trunk!' The project was costly, but was completed. The tree still showed no signs of improvement. Ultimately, the gardener came and said, 'Water it.' That was *the* solution.

The right person at the right place at the right time sets even wrong things right. This is as true of small undertakings as it is of greater ones. Many reformers had preceded Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. They had all tried, in their own ways, to make adjustments to the Indian religio-socio-cultural scene. Nothing significant came out of such reforms. They all touched only the outer fringes because they could not grasp the problem in true perspective. Sri Ramakrishna alone understood what the seed-problem and its remedy were. He taught three important things:

(1) The aim of human life is God-realization. God alone is as real as the fruit on one's palm; all else is illusory like

a dream.

(2) The inferior devotee says that God is there, the mediocre devotee says that God is the Indweller, and the superior devotee says that it is God alone who has become the universe and all the living beings.

(3) Since, in truth, all beings are God wearing various masks, there is no point in seeking God elsewhere. If God can be worshipped in images, can He not be worshipped in man? If God can be seen with eyes closed, can He not be seen with eyes open? Serve human beings as God, with devotion. That is the present-day path to Self-realization.

These three teachings, each a corollary to the other, is what was called Practical Vedanta by Swami Vivekananda. He spent the remainder of his life to propagate these truths.

What are the main benefits of the above teachings?

(a) God-realization as the supreme goal of human life gives meaning and direction to human existence in an evanescent world. This brings an end to all suffering and fills one with Bliss—a tangible fruit of God-realization. Thus, the spiritual problem is taken care of.

(b) Seeing all beings as manifestations of God brings about the awareness of the spiritual oneness of mankind. This puts an end to conflicts born of segregation and brings about integration. Thus, the

problems at the psychological level are taken care of.

(c) Serving all beings as God is a unique teaching. Its practice will bring about tremendous social benefit. Thus the problems at the physical level are taken care of. Also, the performance of unselfish action leads the performer to God-realization.

Evidently, these ideals of Sri Ramakrishna are not the sole property of any religion. Everyone can strive to see God within and without, and serve fellow beings in that light. Such a universal concept of religion is unique. It was not emphasized before.

Surprisingly enough, each race can claim that the above teachings were intended for them alone. This treasure was handed over by Sri Ramakrishna to Swami Vivekananda for broadcasting all over the world. Had not Sri Ramakrishna prophesied: 'Naren will teach the world'? The whole world was waiting for this light which Swamiji had. How would he give it?

A lengthy introduction has been given to show what the Ramakrishna Mission means to the world. Swamiji had one thought foremost in his mind. It was the betterment of humanity at all levels, until everyone saw Light. In course of his travels both in India and abroad, Swamiji had seen and understood the problems of the world. India needed material assistance, the West needed spiritual guidance. He had also understood the potential of organized work.

It is in this background that we should see the founding of the Ramakrishna Mission. That the Mission is meant for India alone is an understatement. If Swamiji's intentions were the betterment of India alone, he would not have sent so many of his brother disciples and disciples to the West. Swamiji's mission was global, from the very beginning.

That such a mission has completed a hundred years is no small an event. The

centenary was therefore celebrated with grandeur in Calcutta, the birthplace of the Mission.

Many of us have seen the picture of a lean, bearded gentleman with a turban on his head. That was of Balaram Bose, a favourite householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Like Swamiji, Balaram too had asked Sri Ramakrishna on his first visit: 'Sir, can God be realized?' Sri Ramakrishna would not usually spend the nights in Calcutta anywhere other than at Balaram's. The Holy Mother, the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and the lay devotees, all frequented the house of this devotee and made it a place of pilgrimage, so much so it became known as Balaram Mandir. Swamiji too had been staying in this house for some days, when on 1 May 1897, he called a meeting of the devotees and monks and founded the Ramakrishna Mission Association. This seemingly small event was to have global ramifications in days to come.

Proceedings of the First Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission Association Saturday — 1st May 1897

In pursuance to a call from Swami Vivekananda, a meeting of the Grihastha disciples and followers of Sri Ramakrishna Deva was held on the evening of the 1st May 1897 at the premises of the late Baboo Balaram Bose, No. 57 Ramakanta Bose's Street, Calcutta. Several Sanyasis of the Alambazar Math favoured the meeting with their presence. In view of the increasing interest and expansion of the movement to diffuse Paramahansa Deva's ideas, teachings and principles, it was thought desirable to form an Organization to carry on the work methodically. A local centre in Calcutta was thought to be essential, where all could meet regularly to exchange their ideas, to adopt means for diffusing the knowledge of those principles and teachings to the masses and to keep themselves in touch with the other sister bodies in differ-

ent parts of India, America and England by the interchange of views for the furtherance of the cause. A general body of members was drawn up consisting of all who, however differing from each other in other respects, have a common ground of unity in the love of Paramahansa Deva and his teachings.

An executive committee has also been formed from amongst those present and a subscription list was opened for collecting a monthly sum for house rent and other necessary expenditure. It was resolved to hold weekly meetings at the house of Baboo G.C. Ghose for the present.

The preliminary meeting of the Committee was fixed to take place on Wednesday evening next to consider, fix up rules of guidance and the principles, objects of the association. Number of audience was about 40.

Wednesday — 5th May 1897

2nd Meeting of the Association

Under the Presidency of Swami Vivekananda, the name, object, method of work of the association and the rules for its guidance were fixed upon. These were the following.

Name: The Ramakrishna Mission.

Object: The object of this society is to propagate the principles propounded by Sri Ramakrishna and illustrated by His own life for the benefit of humanity and to help mankind in the practical application of those principles in their spiritual, intellectual and physical needs.

The Mission: The Mission of this society is to carry on the work inaugurated by Sri Ramakrishna of fraternizing the various creeds of the world, knowing them to be only phases of one eternal Universal religion.

Method of Work: The method of work is by starting centres in different places to train spiritual and secular educators and thereby encouraging arts and industries, and by popularizing the study of the Vedanta and other systems of spiritual thought as inter-

preted by the life of Sri Ramakrishna.

The Work in India: The work in India is by starting Centres in the capital of the Empire to train *sanyasins* (ascetics) and *grihasthas* (householders) as educators of the people and to enable these teachers to reach the people by making them visit different parts of the country.

Foreign Work: To send missionaries to various foreign countries, to bring the Centres already existing in countries outside India in sympathy and co-operation with those existing in India and to start other Centres.

The following rules were unanimously adopted for the guidance of the Calcutta Centre of the Mission:

The rules of the association:

1. Anyone who believes in the mission of Sri Ramakrishna, is ready to co-operate for the spread of that mission and endeavours to lead a moral life, would be eligible to the membership of the society—the other members not objecting.

2. The members should pay a subscription not less than eight annas per month unless anyone is especially incapable.

3. The President of every branch shall have the power of vetoing any proceedings of that branch.

4. The executive committee shall have the power of calling meetings through the secretaries and collecting funds through the treasurer.

5. A meeting should be held every Sunday at 6.30 PM at the premises of No. 13 Bosepara Lane, Baghbazar.

Swami Vivekananda has been elected the General President of the Ramakrishna Mission.

Swami Brahmananda has been elected the President of the Calcutta Centre of the Mission.

*The Celebration at
Balaram Mandir
1 May 1997*

Balaram Mandir is a very old house renovated from time to time. To the western side on the first floor is a shrine and prayer hall. This hall has, associated with it, many sacred memories. On 1 May 1997, a special worship was performed to Sri Ramakrishna in the shrine. A large number of monks and devotees had assembled here. Devotees had to be stopped at the entrance from around 10 a.m. as the place was becoming overcrowded.

The worship over, a meeting was held there which began with a chanting from the Vedas. Srimat Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Ramakrishna Mission, read out the message from Most Revered Srimat Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Order. The message in part reads (see p. 578):

The Ramakrishna Mission is not a social welfare organization. It has basically a spiritual outlook with social commitments and universal appeal. The aim of this organization is to help people free themselves from suffering and bondage by realizing their divine nature and to awaken them to serve their fellow beings in the spirit of worship....Ramakrishna Mission stands for universal harmony—harmony of religions, harmony of races and cultures, harmony of science and spirituality, harmony of man and nature. Lasting peace can be established in the world only through such harmony.

Swami Smarananandaji, one of the Assistant Secretaries of the Ramakrishna Mis-



Swamis Smarananandaji, Gahananandaji, Atmasthanandaji and Purnatmanandaji at the religious congregation at Balaram Mandir on 1 May 1997

sion, delivered the welcome address. He said that the voice of the age—the voice of harmony, and the voice of spiritual unity which has come out of the mouth of Sri Ramakrishna—has to be spread broadcast so as to reach everyone. This task has been entrusted to the Ramakrishna Mission. Smarananandaji recalled the greatness of Balaram Basu and the house. After welcoming everyone to the day's function, he added that the celebrations will continue during the whole year at various branches of the Ramakrishna Mission, and will be concluded next year at Belur Math.

After the welcome address, Swami Vimalatmananda (in Bengali) and Swami Bodhasarananda (in English) read out the proceedings of the first two meetings of the Association and what happened on the day of the founding a hundred years ago. Swamiji's disciple Sharat Chandra Chakraborty has meticulously recorded and left for posterity the historic event. Swamiji said (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 6, pp. 476–7):

The conviction has grown in my mind after all my travels in various lands that no great cause can succeed without an

organisation.... Let this Association be named after him, in whose name, indeed, we have embraced the monastic life, with whom as your Ideal in life you all toil on the field of work from your station in family life, within twenty years of whose passing away a wonderful diffusion of his holy name and extraordinary life has taken place both in the East and the West.... Be you all helpers in this cause.

Next, Swami Purnatmananda, Editor of *Udbodhan*, spoke eloquently on the need of the Ramakrishna Mission for the present day world. He said:

We are commemorating a historic event now. When the Prophet of the new age, Swami Vivekananda, founded the Ramakrishna Mission which is the union of the social commitment and spiritual culture of mankind, many eyebrows were raised. They all thought Swami Vivekananda was straying away from established norms of Indian culture and spirituality. The sad thing is that they could not decipher the writings of Providence on the wall of time. They could not know that before them stood a living Buddha, a new Christ.

When this new organization was founded a century ago, it was like building a bridge between the ancient and the modern. The two outlooks stood harmonized. The ochre cloth is a symbol of service and great sacrifice. The monk has to dedicate himself wholly for the good of humanity. However, this ideal of serving the masses was not properly comprehended before the advent of Swamiji.



Professor Shankari Prasad Banerji delivering his speech at Balaram Mandir

Therefore, though the householders provided for the sustenance of monks, the monks had remained aloof from the world.

Swami Purnatmananda added that the Ramakrishna Mission is fundamentally a spiritual movement. But, it has social commitments also. He concluded by saying that the inspiration behind the Mission is Sri Ramakrishna. He is the sole inspiration and it was he who wanted his Naren to be a huge tree under whose shelter millions of world-weary souls would find solace.

The next speaker was Professor Shankari Prasad Banerji. Giving a personal touch, Prof. Banerji, formerly Vice-Chancellor of Burdwan University and presently Brajendra Nath Seal Professor of Mental Health and Moral Philosophy of Calcutta University, described how he could never make it to the precincts of Balaram Mandir before. He said he felt himself to be too small to speak before an august audience. He remarked that, around the globe, he had visited many ashramas, study circles and private centres associated with Sri Ramakrishna excepting perhaps in Mexico. This revealed that the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna were resounding everywhere. It

was remarkable, he said, that within a hundred years such a great impact had been made on humanity at the global level. The transformation took place the day Sri Ramakrishna admonished his Narendranath not to be so mean as to seek his own salvation. The transformation that came upon Swami Vivekananda is what is being seen as the Ramakrishna Mission. Prof. Banerji added that the great sceptic in Narendranath was transformed by the miraculous touch of Sri Ramakrishna and became the greatest prophet of all times.

The Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Order, Srimat Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj, delivered the presidential address next. When a person grows spiritually, the whole world becomes a home for him. The term 'global village' as implying scientific development is quite a misnomer, because the unity that can be achieved through spirituality has no parallel. Swami Gahananandaji further said that Swamiji had seen that other religions had brought about prosperity to their respective nations. Why had not Hinduism done this? Other religions had resorted to bloodshed which the Hindu abhorred. The Hindu did not fight to claim his rights. Since Vedic times, the one accepted commandment was that 'all religions are true, all paths are true.' The truth was practically demonstrated by Sri Ramakrishna through his glorious life. Swami Vivekananda learnt this very truth and preached it throughout the world. On the last rock at Kanyakumari, Swamiji hit upon a plan for India's rejuvenation, which was materialized later on. Swamiji proclaimed once that he would not rest until every living being attained liberation. Swami Gahananandaji, quoting from Swamiji, added a few words about the significance of May Day.

Swami Atmasthanandaji, the General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, proposed the vote of thanks. Brushing aside formalities, Swami Atmasthanandaji pertinently asked as to whom he should thank.



Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj delivering the vote of thanks at Balaram Mandir

Was it the speakers who were blessed by having spoken here, or the listeners who were grateful for having heard talks about Swamiji? The Swami ultimately thanked Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swamiji for all that has been done by them for the good of the world.

Thereafter, monks, brahmacharins and devotees were fed sumptuously. It is indeed a cause for wonder that, in such a small place, a centenary celebration was held and hundreds fed systematically.

The Celebration at Nazrul Mancha

1 May 1997

First Session

From about 3.30 p.m., devotees, admirers, monks, brahmacharins and others began to gather at Nazrul Mancha, the venue of the evening's meeting. Named after the

famous poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, Nazrul Mancha is situated near Gol Park in Calcutta. It was well decorated to commemorate a memorable event in history. The portraits of Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi and Swamiji's full-size portrait gave added solemnity to the occasion. There was a huge decorated dais. The hall was full to overflowing. The Hon'ble Vice-President of India, Dr. K.R. Narayanan, arrived, and the grand celebrations began punctually at the stroke of 5 p.m.

'The whole world is filled with the Divine...', said the brahmacharins of the Training Centre in melodious Sanskrit verse as they chanted from the *Isa Upanishad*. They continued, 'No one can attain to immortality through progeny, works or money. This supreme goal can be attained only through renunciation.' Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, the senior Vice-President of the Sangha, could not make it to Calcutta owing to illness. There were, therefore, minor alterations in the programme.

Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj read out the message from Most Revered Srimat Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Order (see p. 579):

The Ramakrishna Mission stands for the mission of Sri Ramakrishna on earth....Swami Vivekananda was one of the first persons to grasp the universal significance of Sri Ramakrishna's message. He saw that it had a special significance for the future of India....After considering several alternatives, Swamiji conceived of an organization in which



Sri K.V. Raghunatha Reddy releasing the Ninth Volume of The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda and presenting a copy of the book with the First Volume of the Concordance to the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda to Dr. K.R. Narayanan at Nazrul Mancha during the First Session

monks of the already existing Ramakrishna Order would take up social service activities in collaboration with lay people who were inspired by the same ideals....The hundred years that the Mission has left behind may be only just a beginning compared to the great task that lies before it in the coming centuries....(The Mission will) become a progressively better channel for the flow of their (Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda) grace and love to larger and larger numbers of people all over the world.

After the message was read, Swami Smarananandaji welcomed the august audience and said: 'The Ramakrishna Mission Association was founded by Swamiji on 1 May 1897 at Balaram Bose's house. The word 'association' was given up in 1909 when the Mission was registered under the Societies' Registration Act.' Swami Smarananandaji added further that the celebrations were to continue during the whole year in various centres and the concluding ceremony would be held in February 1998 at Belur Math.

It is well known that *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* in English exists in eight volumes. However,

thanks to Sister Gargi (Marie Louise Burke), Prof. Shankari Prasad Basu and other scholars, after decades of extensive research a ninth volume has come out recently. This volume, a centenary tribute to the world, was recently released by the Governor of West Bengal, Sri K.V. Raghunatha Reddy. Before releasing

the book, Sri Reddy remarked that there are three ills in society: inequality, ignorance and the desire for affluence. Swamiji had said that through (i) the spread of education, (ii) the dissemination of the spiritual ideal, and (iii) resorting to the ideal of renunciation, these evils can be eradicated from society. The ninth volume, after its release, was presented to the Hon'ble Vice-President of India along with the first volume of *The Concordance to Swamiji's works*.

Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj delivering the Presidential Address said that we are indeed lucky in having the opportunity of celebrating the centenary of the Ramakrishna Mission. Such a centenary, however, could well have been celebrated earlier itself commemorating such special occasions as when Sri Ramakrishna had told the devotees that 'not compassion, but service of God' was the ideal. Again a centenary of the occasion when Sri Ramakrishna admonished his Narendranath not to seek his own samadhi instead of being a blessing to the world could also have been celebrated. Swami Atmasthanandaji added that Swamiji preached Vedanta in the West whereas his message was different in India to suit the conditions prevailing at that time.



Dr. K.R. Narayanan, Sri K.V. Raghunatha Reddy and Srimat Swami Lokeshwaranandaji Maharaj at the function at Nazrul Mancha, First Session

People need to be raised from where they are.

The inaugural address of the Vice-President of India, Dr. K.R. Narayanan, was the next item. Dr. Narayanan held the audience in rapt attention while he spoke extempore on Swamiji, his mission on earth, the Mission's objectives, its implications and so on (see p. 581). 'I feel very much honoured to have been invited to attend the inaugural celebration of the centenary of the Ramakrishna Mission,' he began. He eulogized Sri Ramakrishna first, and said that 'the sharp simplicity of his words and the elemental force of his personality brought about a revolution in human thinking.' The Vice-President went on to speak about the organization founded by Swamiji. He spoke how Swamiji's own brother disciples doubted his methods but accepted him later on. 'All his [Swamiji's] aspirations, all his spiritual endeavours, were directed to the betterment of human beings, the material improvement of the Indian masses,' he said. Calling Swami Vivekananda a spiritual nationalist whose main aim was to awaken the masses from torpor, he said, 'The mission of Swamiji is yet to be accomplished fully from the point of view of abolishing poverty in our coun-

try.' 'Ramakrishna Mission has, however, done glorious work in this field,' he said. Dr. Narayanan further added, 'If a sannyasin is expected to do constructive work in addition to meditation, one can very well expect a politician or a statesman not to be preoccupied with politics only but indulge in a bit of reflection and meditation, which would reveal to them the problems of individuals.' The Vice-President spoke highly about Swamiji's method of education and Swamiji's faith in the power of women. In conclusion, he said that Swamiji's vision was not limited to a nation, but global. Dr. Narayanan concluded his speech by paying homage to Swamiji and his Mission.

Swami Lokeswaranandaji proposed the vote of thanks. He said that the Ramakrishna Mission began as a very tiny and insignificant organization. But the organization has created a landmark in history within one hundred years. He spoke about the accomplishment of the Ramakrishna Mission in doing good to mankind and thanked one and all for participating in this noble task. He also thanked the participants in the function at Nazrul Mancha. Swami Animeshananda presented a melodious bhajan.

Second Session

The second session of the celebration at Nazrul Mancha was chaired by Swami Vandananandaji, a senior Trustee of the Ramakrishna Mission. Among the speakers were Srimat Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj, Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Order, Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj and Prof.



Professor Shankari Prasad Basu and Swamis Vandananandaji, Gahananandaji and Lokeswaranandaji Maharaj at Nazrul Mancha, Second Session

Shankari Prasad Basu.

The first speaker was Prof. Shankari Prasad Basu. He is well known as a scholar who has done extensive research on Swamiji and Nivedita. The speaker began by quoting Jagadish Chandra Bose, the renowned scientist who, in reference to Swamiji after his passing away, said:

There was in him one man who had made achievements in every field of human endeavour. What a tremendous achievement within a few years! But, he is gone now. His name and learning, however, will work to uplift mankind.

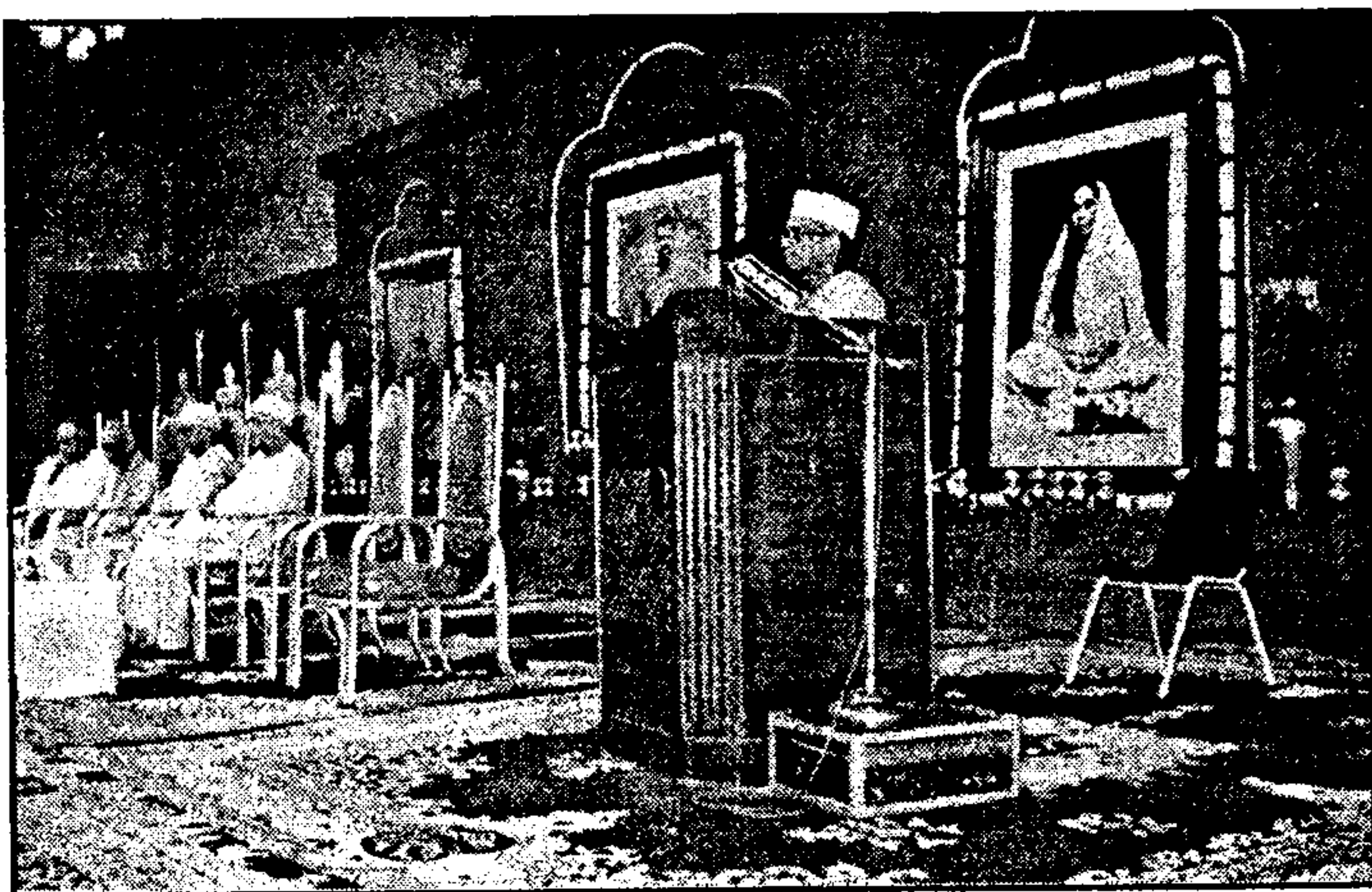
And these words were spoken by a genius in the scientific world about a genius in the spiritual world. J.C. Bose appreciated Swamiji in this manner because he and Swamiji had joined hands at the plane of a spiritual, advaitic unity, where religion and science meet. The Ramakrishna Mission has endeavoured to bring about the harmony between science and religion, the speaker added. Sri Ramakrishna had said that during *mahāpralaya* (the great dissolution), the Divine Mother gathers seeds for a future creation. Sri Ramakrishna is Kālī's *avatar* and he had with him the seed of the future work.

He gave that seed to Narendranath before departing.

Swamiji's power of creativity set into existence the machine which later came to be called the Ramakrishna Mission. Just as Sri Ramakrishna gave away everything to Naren before passing, Naren gave everything to the successors in the Math before his own passing. Hence, the Sangha is called the physical body of Sri Ramakrishna. This is

how Prof. Basu interpreted the spiritual outlook in respect of the Sangha. Regarding the Ramakrishna Mission itself, Prof. Basu said that it is a non-proselytizing secular Mission, in which the householders have the main share. Anyone, either a believer or a non-believer can serve fellow human beings with dignity and this leads to human excellence. Posing the question as to what the Ramakrishna Mission has done to us, the speaker said that the list was endless. Of the few he mentioned, one was that the world came to know about Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swamiji through the Mission. People got access to the famous literature because of the Mission. The world got its eternal Mother owing to this Mission.

Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj, who is known for his systematic analysis of ideas and has done extensive research on Sri Ramakrishna also, discussed the relationship between Swamiji and his Master, the inauguration of the Ramakrishna Mission by Swamiji, and the historical perspective of events related to the founding of the Organization. Of the points he mentioned, the divine vision that Sri Ramakrishna received to found a community 'given to his liberal views' was one, the training of the disciples



Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj delivering his address at the Nazrul Manch, Second Session

and holding them together in a bond of love was another. Swamiji's successes came as one wave after another by way of his brother disciples uniting to continue the monastery at Baranagar and Alambazar, the West accepting him and the Indian nation being aroused by his call. Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj next explained all that happened on the 1st and the 5th of May 1897. Speaking about the working of the Mission itself, Swami Prabhanandaji said that the Mission had 84 centres along with 78 Math centres and 28 sub-centres. 'Two faces of the same coin', the Math and the Mission 'disseminate the grand message of the Master. In any case, Sri Ramakrishna, the person and the power is the élan of these vibrant institutions and their activities,' he added. The Mission's philosophy was Swami Prabhanandaji's next idea. He spoke highly about the Mission's philanthropic activities and said, a small organization like the Ramakrishna Mission has achieved much in a short time. In conclusion Swami Prabhanandaji appealed to everyone to contribute one's mite to the great cause and become blessed.

Srimat Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj spoke next. He gave a detailed picture of

Swamiji's triumph over the East and the West and elucidated the ideal: 'for one's own liberation and for the good of the world'—the motto of the Ramakrishna Mission. He also spoke about the importance of May Day, which coincidentally is the very day the Mission celebrates its annual foundation day.

Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj could not participate in the celebrations owing to ill health. He had sent a message from Hyderabad which was read out (see p. 580).

The Chairman of the meeting, Swami Vandananandaji Maharaj spoke about how the Ramakrishna Mission was formed, what its motto is, what its ideals are. When Swamiji was present in his room, Sri Ramakrishna had told the devotees: 'All work done unselfishly as service or charity through any man called *jiva* should be transformed into a spiritual means of offering worship to God called Shiva within the needy man. Thus, service of man becomes worship of God.' Swami Vandananandaji Maharaj said that this was the ideal behind serving mankind. He elaborated on the exhortation 'Arise, awake and stop not till the

goal is reached.' India has tradition, culture and so on. Does it have money, happiness, peace, etc.? For this reason Sri Ramakrishna had said that religion is not for the empty stomach. One has to work. Hence Swamiji called upon his countrymen to awake. Swami Vandananandaji concluded his talk by explaining four types of *cetana* (awareness): *Śakti-cetana* meant for Swamiji muscle strength; *Bhakti-cetana* meant devotion to work; *Yukti-cetana* meant rationality; and *Mukti-cetana* meant attaining freedom. Tradition has given elaborate meanings to these terms. Swamiji simplified them for the modern man, he said.

At the close of the day's function, Swami Sarvagananda rendered devotional songs. Later, the famous sitarist, Mr. Parveez Khan, played on the sitar. Unfortunately, many hurried home and missed a great music recital.

The part of the function in which the Vice-President of India took part was telecast live by Calcutta Doordarshan (T.V.). Millions could thereby witness the glory of a mission which belongs to them all. The Calcutta dailies and other dailies in India too gave the function adequate coverage. □

You may be in the world, but your mind must not be tied to it. The Master used to say: 'It is very necessary to have discrimination—to consider that the world is evanescent and that God alone is real and eternal. What can money give you? It can give you food, clothing, and a habitation. That is all; it cannot lead you to God. So money can never be the goal of life. Considering things like this is called discrimination.' Do not cherish in your mind too much of worldly ambition.... The mind has a natural proclivity towards the low and the vulgar—towards lust and lucre and towards name and fame. The task of the aspirant is to gather together that scattered mind and fix it on the lotus feet of the Lord. The highest ambition in life should be the realization of God. Keep that ambition ever awake in the mind, and try heart and soul to reach that goal.

—Swami Shivananda, *For Seekers of God*, p. 167



Centenary of Ramakrishna Mission: A Message

SWAMI BHUTESHANANDA

On 1 May 1997 the following message from Most Revered Srimat Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Order, was read out by Srimat Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj at Balaram Mandir during the religious congregation on the occasion of the inaugural celebration of the Centenary of the Ramakrishna Mission. The account of the celebration appeared in brief in the July 1997 issue.

The establishment of the Ramakrishna Mission by Swami Vivekananda opened a new horizon in the field of socio-religious life in India as well as in the world as a whole. The ideas and ideals of the Mission not only stirred the thinking people of the West, they also inspired monks and householders in our country to take to a new way of life.

The activities of the Mission are pioneering efforts for the regeneration of the masses. The Ramakrishna Mission, however, is not a social welfare organization, but it has basically a spiritual outlook with social commitments and universal appeal. The aim of this organization is to help people free themselves from suffering and bondage by realizing their divine nature and awaken them to serve their fellow beings in the spirit of worship. These ideals are implied in the motto that Swamiji gave to the Ramakrishna Mission: '*atmano mokshartham jagaddhitaya cha, For one's own liberation and for the welfare of the world.*'

Furthermore, Ramakrishna Mission stands for universal harmony—harmony of religions, harmony of races and cultures, harmony of science and spirituality, harmony of man and nature. Lasting peace can be established in the world only through

such harmony.

What was sown in seed form a century ago by Swamiji at Balaram Bose's house in Calcutta, has now grown into a huge banyan tree with the great ideals of '*bahujana hitaya, bahujana sukhaya, for the well-being of the many, for the happiness of the many.*' The Mission centres have been established in various countries and from there the great message of hope preached by Swamiji is spreading silently for the benefit of the whole of humanity.

I convey my hearty wishes on this special occasion to those who have helped the Mission in various ways to grow into its present stature. I hope that by the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swamiji, in the years to come, the Mission will be able to extend its field of service more effectively for the benefit of the suffering humanity. □

A frog had a rupee, which he kept in his hole. One day an elephant was going over the hole, and the frog, coming out in a fit of anger, raised his foot, as if to kick the elephant, and said: 'How dare you walk over my head?' Such is the pride money begets!

—Sri Ramakrishna
Tales and Parables, p. 46



Centenary Celebrations of The Ramakrishna Mission: A Benedictory Message

SWAMI BHUTESHANANDA

The following message from the Most Revered President Maharaj of the Ramakrishna Order was read out by Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj on 1 May 1997 in the public meeting at Nazrul Mancha during the first session.

The Ramakrishna Mission stands for the mission of Sri Ramakrishna on earth. He appeared at one of the major watersheds in the history of mankind, at a time when faith in dogmatic religion had begun to decline, and reason and science were on the rise. Sri Ramakrishna came with a new vision for mankind, a new message of harmony, divinity of the soul and direct spiritual experience.

Swami Vivekananda was one of the first persons to grasp the universal significance of Sri Ramakrishna's message. He saw that it had a special significance for the future of India. Travelling the length and breadth of India, Swamiji was deeply moved to see the depth of poverty, backwardness and ignorance to which the masses of India had sunk. He saw that what the downtrodden people needed most was a living message which would enable them to be on their own feet by infusing in them strength, faith in themselves, and the spirit of service. It became clear to Swami Vivekananda that in the highly disorganized condition of Indian society no great work could be done unless it was sustained by a powerful organization. As Swamiji wrote in one of his letters: 'My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate.'¹ An organization can become a machinery of this kind only if it consists of people who are wedded

to truth, purity and unselfishness. After considering several alternatives, Swamiji conceived of an organization in which monks of the already existing Ramakrishna Order would take up social service activities in collaboration with lay people who were inspired by the same ideals.

A hundred years have passed since Swami Vivekananda convened the meeting of the monastic and lay devotees of Sri Ramakrishna on the 1st of May 1897 at the house of Balaram Basu, and founded the Ramakrishna Mission Association. What began in a humble way with a handful of people has since become a world-wide institution. It has now become a major force of influence in every field of social service in India.

Two distinctive features of Ramakrishna Mission's work may be mentioned here. One is that service to man is regarded as worship to God. Secondly, the Mission is open to all people without any distinction of religion, race, caste or nationality.

It should, however, be remembered that the Ramakrishna Mission is primarily a spiritual organization rather than a social

(Continued on page 597)

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 5, p. 29.



Centenary of Ramakrishna Mission: A Message

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

The following is the text of the message communicated by Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj on the occasion of the inaugural celebration of the Centenary of the Ramakrishna Mission. The message was read out on 1 May 1997 at Nazrul Mancha by Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj during the second session.

This day, a hundred years ago, Swami Vivekananda, with the cooperation of the monastic and the householder disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, assembled in Bālarām Babu's house in North Calcutta, much frequented by Sri Ramakrishna, and inaugurated the Ramakrishna Mission.

Most people know the Ramakrishna Mission only as an organization for efficient service to humanity. But there is a profound philosophy and spirituality behind the action and modes of service which contain a comprehensive view of the entire human life and destiny. This is the Vedanta philosophy and spirituality of the Upanishads and the *Gita* of the past, and Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual experiences and message of the modern age.

The scientific and truth-seeking minds of the ancient Indian sages of the Upanishads made an in-depth study of the human being in their search for the Imperishable and the Infinite Truth, and discovered the same in every human being just as modern physical science discovered more and more energies as they penetrated deeper into matter and finally came across the enormous power of nuclear energy. And the sages boldly expounded this truth in that brief utterance of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*: *Tat tvam asi*,—'That thou art', a truth highly commended by modern scientists like

Schrodinger and J.B.S. Haldane.

This Vedanta philosophy and spirituality expounds the truth of the inherent divinity of every human being and his or her organic capacity to realize this truth. In the light of this supreme vision of the Indian sages, sharp divisions of humanity in terms of religion, race, language, and other divisions appear as elementary. The modern world itself is progressing towards a global unity, and the harmony and unity needed to sustain it must come from within the human being itself.

That is the vast scope which Swami Vivekananda found in the Vedanta philosophy and spirituality, so emphasized in our age by Sri Ramakrishna, and which he [Swamiji] presented powerfully, both in the East and the West. Romain Rolland, the French biographer of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, presents both to the modern world as 'the splendid symphony of the Universal Soul'. Of the many levels of human services and welfare coming from this philosophy and spirituality, the Ramakrishna Mission's service to all human beings, without the distinction of caste, creed, colour, or sex is only one of the most concrete and creative expressions.

(Continued on page 587)



Centenary of the Ramakrishna Mission: Inaugural Address

DR. K.R. NARAYANAN
HON'BLE VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA

(Delivered at Nazrul Mancha on 1 May 1997 during the First Session)

Honourable Governor Sri Raghunath Reddy, Swami Atmasthanandaji, Swami Lokeshwaranandaji, Swami Gahananandaji, Swami Smarananandaji, Respected Swamiji of the Ramakrishna Mission, Mrs. Sarojini Reddy,¹ Mrs. Kamal Basu,² ladies and gentlemen,

I have been very much honoured to have been invited to attend the inaugural celebration of the centenary of Ramakrishna Mission.

Ramakrishna Mission is one of the vital spiritual and social movements in the world. That it was born in India, in Bengal, the seed-bed of social reformation and national revolution in India is something of which every Indian and every Bengali can be proud. We have had an unceasing succession of great and holy men in this country of ours. This is a great blessing for us and also a tremendous responsibility because we are obliged to strive up to the great ideal and teachings they have placed before us.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was an extraordinary personality. The sharp simplicity of his words and the elemental force of his personality brought about a revolution in human thinking. Swami Vivekananda considered him the living synthesis of all the spiritual forces of India. Romain Rolland once described him as the younger brother of Jesus Christ. Inspired by the

teachings of this great soul, the Ramakrishna Mission was founded by Swami Vivekananda a century ago.

Swami Vivekananda was a profoundly spiritual personality and at the same time he was intensely aware of the problems of the humankind in the world. He believed that organization, and organized work, was the key to elevating the poverty-stricken India from its sorry condition. Swami Vivekananda, after visiting America was even more deeply convinced about the importance of organization in propagating ideas and bringing about a solution to the material problems of people. Once he remarked about an unfortunate characteristic of Indians: 'Three men cannot act in concert together in India for five minutes. Each one struggles for power, and in the long run the whole organization comes to grief.'³ One wonders on seeing that what Swamiji said about his own times applies to our own times also.

When the Ramakrishna Mission was founded and thereafter Swamiji laid down the aims and objectives of this Mission, some of his brother disciples had doubts about the introduction of the Western methods of organization into this Mission. I think his reply to this was one of great indignation. He even pointed out sternly that bhakti was not sentimental nonsense. He believed that it was

1. Wife of the Governor of West Bengal.

2. Wife of Sri Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal.

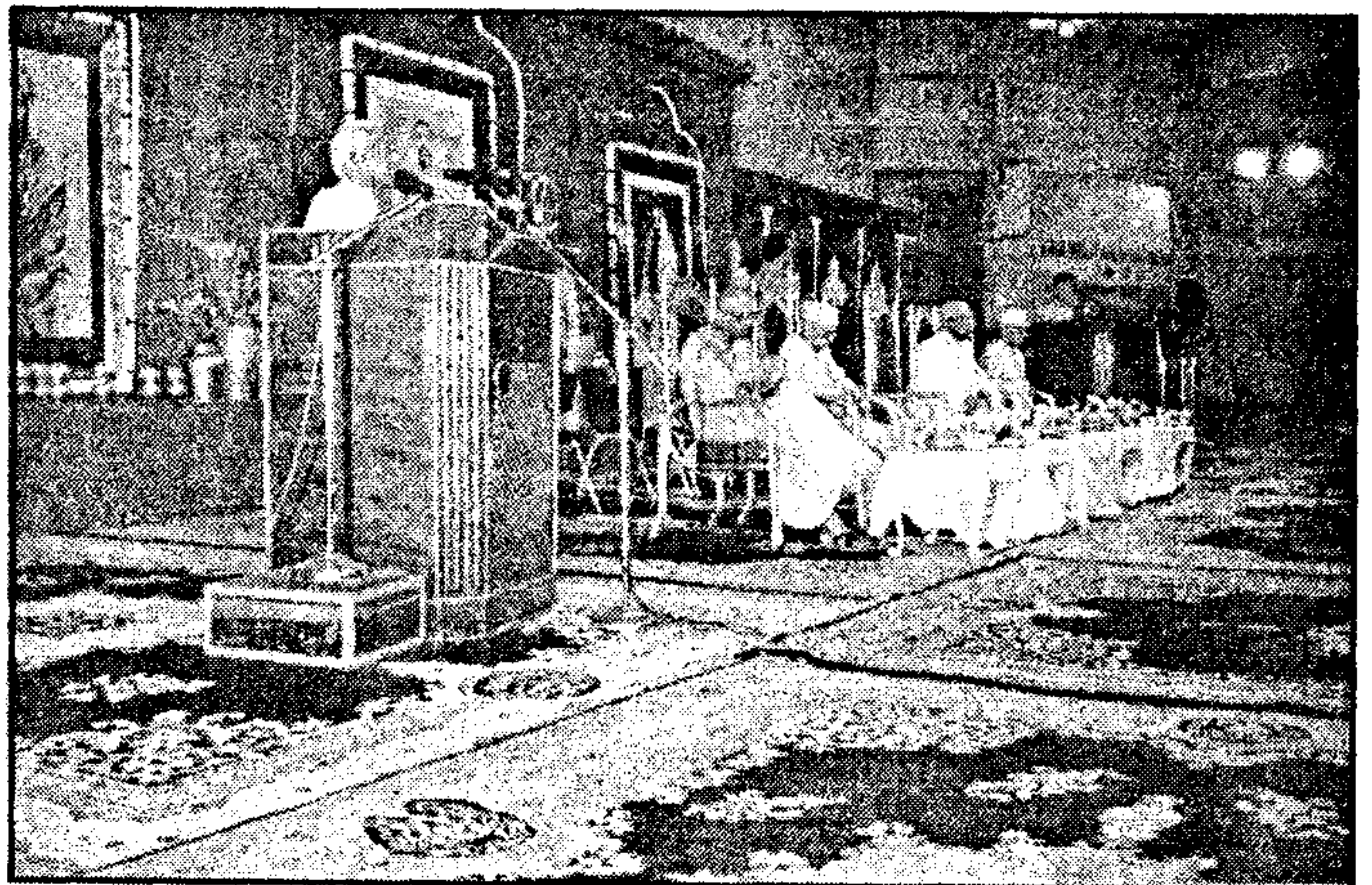
3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 8, p. 300. [Hereafter, CW].

not sufficient for spiritual men to stay in ashramas and shut their eyes to the sorrows, joys and problems of the generality of humankind. He was agonized by the human poverty in India. When he was in Chicago at the height of popularity, he could not sleep on the cosy bed provided for him and he rolled on the ground in the room agonized by the poverty of Indians. It is also said that when he once read about a death in Calcutta as a result of plague, he exclaimed, 'We have to serve them, even though we are required to sell everything.' Therefore, all his spiritual aspirations, all his spiritual endeavours were directed to the betterment of human beings, the material improvement of the Indian masses, the abolition of poverty among the masses. In fact, when he went to America, one of his objectives was to collect money. He thought he could collect money in that rich land and use it for abolishing poverty in India. But soon he found out that it was difficult to collect money for the 'heathen' in a foreign land.

In respect of India, his primary obsession was to deal with poverty, ignorance and disease. I think he was a spiritual nationalist, the most passionate nationalist we have seen in India, and he travelled from one end of India to another with the object of rousing the people of India from their torpor, instilling in them self-respect and an awareness of their capacity to deal with their own problems themselves, so that they could stand on their own legs.

The Mission of Swami Vivekananda is yet to be accomplished fully from the point of view of abolishing poverty in our country. Ramakrishna Mission has, however, done glo-

rious work in this field. One of their original objectives has been promotion and encouragement of arts and industries in India. Like its founder, the Ramakrishna Mission believes that sannyasins should be involved in the alleviation of the sufferings of their fellowmen. Swami Vivekananda once said that a sannyasin should be capable of being lost in meditation one moment, and the very next moment take up the plough and go to the field to cultivate. This was his concept of the monk of the Order of Ramakrishna. But one can extend the idea to its logical conclusion. The monks of the Ramakrishna Mission have undertaken social work, constructive work. But is it not also the responsibility of the millions of people in India, especially those better off, the educated sections of our country, the richer sections of our country, to do something for their fellowmen? If a sannyasin is expected to do constructive work in addition to meditation, one can very well expect a politician or a statesman not to be pre-occupied with politics only but indulge in a bit of reflection and meditation also which would reveal to them the problems of individuals. I am emphasizing this particularly today because the Ramakrishna Order is a relatively small Order but it has made a great impact on society through



Dr. K.R. Narayanan delivering the Inaugural Speech at the Nazrul Mancha on 1 May 1997, First Session

spiritual work, social welfare and constructive activities in which they have engaged themselves. If this selfless style of working of the sannyasins can be imbibed, at least some of it, by the vast array of civil servants we have in this country, the enormous number of politicians and public men in this country, then our problems could be dealt with more successfully.

I have spoken about Swami Vivekananda's obsession with the problem of poverty. He was equally obsessed with the problem of lack of education. Some of Swami Vivekananda's ideas on education are even today ahead of our times. He decried the fact that in India for ages education was monopolized by a few people and denied to the masses. He wanted education to spread and for this he pointed out some major steps. In a letter he wrote to the Maharaja of Mysore, he said, 'Supposing even your Highness opens a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty in India is such, that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields, or otherwise try to make a living, than come to the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him.'⁴ We should go to the people, to the children and teach them. This is the modern method of teaching.

When I went some years ago to Sudan (Cuba?), I found that it was precisely this method they had adopted and by this they abolished illiteracy within one year in their country. Swamiji advised that the sannyasins should themselves indulge in imparting literacy education of the people. If not only sannyasins but millions of people who work in the government devote at least half of their time to teaching people, illiteracy could be abolished within a few years.

Swamiji also believed in the education

of women. He said that the main reason for the decline of India or why India has fallen from the glorious pedestal is the stamping down of the masses and keeping women suppressed. Swami Vivekananda had faith in the power of dedicated and motivated women, more than men, to transform society. Mahatma Gandhi also was of the same opinion. And therefore he pleaded eloquently for the education of women.

I thought that today it was appropriate to stress more on these practical aspects of Swami Vivekananda's thought and teachings because they are desperately needed by us. Of course, Swamiji's ideas are scattered in his works. He was aware, he knew, and he said that the decline of India was due to the isolation of India from the rest of the world and that if India wanted to progress, it must get out of this isolation and be in the current of world events. And the manner in which he wanted to do this was not merely by organizing the Math but by humanizing of world society through it because he had learnt from his Master that there was God in every human being and to seek God you have to seek Him in man.

This world vision of Vivekananda and his concept of tolerance, of the integrity of mankind, of the unity of the goal of all religions, was the message he gave to the world. Thus, Swami Vivekananda was not only pre-occupied with India's problems but with world problems too. He showed a new way to the entire humanity and unified us into a brotherhood. At the same time he was agonized at heart about the condition of Indians and wanted to uplift every Indian to a position of self-respect and strength.

On this centenary of the founding of the Ramakrishna Mission, I pay my humble tribute to Swami Vivekananda and the dedicated monks of the Order who have carried out his message and made an impact not only in India but on the whole world. □

4. CW, vol. 4, p. 363.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad

SWAMI SRIDHARANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च।
खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी॥
*Etasmāt-jāyate prāṇo manah
sarvendriyāṇi ca,
Kham vāyur-jyotir-āpah
pṛthivī viśvasya dhāriṇī. (II.i.3.)*

From Him originates the vital force as well as the mind and all the senses, space, air, fire, water (fluids) and the earth, which supports everything.

From *jāgrata* one goes to *turiya*, and from *turiya* he comes back to *jāgrata*. Going into *turiya*, one enjoys the bliss of *Saccidānanda* Atman in which the *jagat prapañca* is merged, but coming back to *jāgrata* he sees the *prapañca* all around him. In the previous *mantra*, the *turiya avasthā* was described and in the present *mantra*, is described what happens to a *Brahmajña* when he comes down to the normal level of consciousness.

We human beings have somehow come to believe the unreal as the real and the Real as the unreal. The Reality, Atman or Brahman, appears to us as an imagination and unreal, whereas the unreal diversity of the many things we see in the universe, we take to be real. First, we should be rationally convinced that what we think to be unreal is in essence Real, and Vedanta must also give us a methodology to experience the unreality of the so-called real appearances of the world. This understanding is obtained by the use of *adhyāropa-apavāda nyāya*. Vedanta accepts at first the experience of the whole (*sarvam*) without contradicting it, but points out that in reality it is all Brahman which is also our own true original nature. One's

separate individual existence, separate from others which constitutes the *sarvam*, is also a part of the *sarvam*; the changeless highest common factor is the *Saccidānanda* Atman or Brahman. A time will come in our lives when the diversity and concreteness of the universe as grasped by our senses at present will undergo a sea-change and it will be known to be a mere shadow of the Reality, which is *trikāla-abādhita*, uncontradicted in all the three orders of time. The change is not in the quality of the erroneous experience of the world, but in its duration as compared with the experience of the *adhiṣṭhāna*, Real Substratum, on which it rests. The snake-illusion and the world-illusion are both cases of errors of judgement, *ajñāna*. When in the *jāgrata*, the mind being controlled takes us to the *turiya* state of oneness with the Reality, then we say what a prolonged dream (known as *jāgrata avasthā*) we had been experiencing. *Turiya* destroys the sense of reality and everlastingness of the cosmos which is then known to be the domain of *nāma-rūpa-artha-kriyā-kāritva*, name-form-utility-action-agency. As we wake up from *suṣupti* and *svapna*, so we wake up from our *jāgrata avasthā*—seeing everything but having the experience of the highest common factor of all that is seen. It is stated as *sarvam khalu idam Brahma*. A parallel is being drawn on the cosmic level from the level of *turiya*. The *jāgrata* is this world appearance seen with the physical eyes (other sense organs also included), *svapna* is the domain of the mind with its ideas of the world, and *suṣupti* is *pralaya*, cosmic destruction. However, the seeds of the *jāgrata*-world remain and sprout again in their own time unless the third eye

of wisdom opens in *turiya*. Whereas the ordinary eyes are conditioned to see the many *nāma-rūpas*, the *siddha puruṣa*, realized man, sees only the Divine everywhere through the third eye.

The Upaniṣad now compares the entire cosmos with its levels of awareness to the individual. Just as we have our body-awareness in *jāgrat avasthā*, so also the body of the cosmos is the *virāt Puruṣa*, *Īśvara*, residing everywhere, in everything. On this cosmic substratum we have superimposed or projected by imagination, life breath, mind, all the senses, space, air, light, water, earth. From the Absolute has come all these things even as the snake, a torn garland, the crack in the road or a streak of water have all come out of the rope. The *dvaita-vādins* hold that from That thing all these things are actually produced (*jāyate*) and that the Absolute has really *become* the world. Advaita Vedanta does not say no to this thesis. If one thinks that God is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient and has created everything, that is perfectly alright. But if you *know* God, He will let you know what His true nature is, says Advaita Vedanta. The word '*jāyate*' should not bring in the concept of *janma*, birth, that is, creation of something out of something else. Sri Ramakrishna gave an example: A zamindar had a very loyal and humble person (*nāyab*) keeping his accounts. After observing him for many years, the zamindar called him one day, asked him to sit next to him and said that after testing him well and finding him to be honest, he had become worthy to know the zamindar's secrets. Similarly, if one does not want to follow Advaita Vedanta just now, and if one is happy to pray to any *Iṣṭa* (Chosen Deity) humbly, one is free to do so. But a time will come when He, (his *Iṣṭa*), will call him and explain to him the intricacies of this whole cosmos. After going through the process of the world-illusion, the misconceptions are washed away and the *adhiṣṭhāna*, the substratum of the world, alone will remain.

While he is in the state of superimposition by the snake etc., i.e. *ajñāna*, the Reality (rope) is hidden from his understanding. It will be seen in *turiya* as *nirvikalpa*, *nirākāra*, *nirguṇa* Brahman. From That is born all this but in reality there is no link, as in birth, between the snake and the rope. This *mantra*, therefore, explains the logic of *adhyāropa-apavāda*.

The Upaniṣad gives us full freedom to make the same mistake we make every-day—to superimpose all perceived things on the Reality—to ultimately teach us that all this was a misconception. Next we are asked to pay attention only to the 'Real Thing' which has so long eluded us. It is only a matter of time before we come to this right understanding. But only after getting many hard knocks from our so-called real world do we start the inquiry: 'Who am I?' As Swami Vivekananda said, 'Oh! I am sick of this unending farce; these shows they please no more. This ever running, never reaching, nor e'en a distant glimpse of shore!'¹ This is verily the way in which we lead our lives, and the Upaniṣad repeatedly tell us that it is a wrong way. Do not allow the superimposed objects to assume importance and lose sight of the real substratum. In the realization of Advaita everything in the world will remain as they appear and what will disappear is the sense of separateness and the feeling that these appearances are real. In *turiya-avasthā*, I, you and the world will remain but the superimposed separateness will disappear. Meera Bai expresses this in her hymn, '*Prem kī aisī āg lagegi mai merī jal jāūngī*.' 'The blessed fire of devotion will burn away my "me" and "mine",' the imposed sense of separateness. When body consciousness abates, *Paramātman* or Oneness is seen everywhere though the mind

1. 'My Play is Done', *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 6, p. 175. [Hereafter CW].

may go dressed up in a name and form. When the devotees of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu asked him why he made no distinction between a saint and a sinner and gave to both equal affection, he replied²: In whichever direction my vision goes, there I see only Kṛṣṇa,' and so there is no saint or sinner for me. He saw Oneness everywhere.

अग्निर्मूर्धा चक्षुषी चन्द्रसूर्यौ
दिशः श्रोत्रे वाग्विवृताश्च वेदाः।
वायुः प्राणो हृदयं विश्वमस्य
पद्भ्यां पृथिवी ह्येष सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा॥
Agnir-mūrdhā, cakṣuṣī candra-sūryau
diśaḥ śrotre, vāg-vivṛtāśca vedāḥ;
Vāyuhī prāṇo, hṛdayam viśvam-asya
padbhyām pṛthivī hy-eṣa
sarva-bhūtāntarātmā. (II.i.4.)

Truly, He is the inner self of all, whose head is the fire, the two eyes are the moon and the sun, the two ears are the directions (space), the voice is the revealed Vedas, the breath is the air, whose heart is the whole world, and from whose two feet the earth has emerged.

The teacher goes further on to recite the *adhyāsa*, superimposition on Atman or Brahman. The first is the entire cosmos, the *virāt Puruṣa*. The *Sṛṣṭitattva* (Cosmology) explained here shows that the many separate things of the universe have come from the One indwelling Soul of all. The Supreme Puruṣa is everywhere. The teacher says that the entire universe is His body: His head, the eyes, the ears, the speech, the life force, the heart, are the various parts of the universe. Being human, we want a cosmic human form as our ideal. So creation is explained anthropomorphically. Cosmic energy or fire is conceived as the head of the Eternal Being; the sun and the moon are the two eyes of that great Reality; the ten directions and space spread over the cosmos are His ears; His

capacity to express in speech is found in the four Vedas; His life breath of inhalation and exhalation is the air; His heart or the capacity to feel emotion is the whole universe; and the earth is the ground on which He stands with His two feet. This is how the Cosmic Person, *Viśva Mānava*, is viewed.

Physicists have discovered many types of energy, each of which manifests itself in separate avenues. Similarly, Vedantins identify Cosmic Energy as manifesting in the head, the eyes, etc. of living beings, and their counterparts exist in the Cosmos, in the *virāt Puruṣa*. Thus, this feeble man is projected infinitely, and it is impressed upon him that he is to expand and not live under the misconception that he is a petty being. The body consciousness has a tremendous hold on us and as long as it lasts we feel weak, frail, small and inadequate. As we try to get rid of this body-consciousness and try to expand ourselves, we will feel that we are no longer limited to one body and we will then be able to experience that we are all-pervading though residing in our body. So we are to make use of this body mechanism to break the shackles of limitation, or, according to Vedanta, this body is to be conceived as the whole universe, i.e., our real form is the Cosmos. Swami Vivekananda says that our attitude should be like that of a caged lion which has come out of the cage to enjoy freedom.³ We can expand ourselves to cosmic dimensions and become identified with the universe. We are in the universe and the universe is in us. This is the *lakṣyārtha* of this *mantra*. It is also suggested that we should educate ourselves to go beyond the physical limitations and grow to infinite dimensions.

Sṛṣṭitattva, cosmology, or the theory of the origin of the world, as also how long the

2. *Yatra yatra netra paḍe, tatra tatra kṛṣṇa sphure.*

3. 'Nirgacchati jagat jālāt piḍjarādiva keṭiari,' *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 6, pp. 273, 311.

universe will last and in what order it will dissolve—these questions trouble us. However, cosmology has no intrinsic worth. It has only a secondary importance. The world in itself has no integral meaning other than to lead one to the Absolute. So we should not trouble ourselves to know *how* the world came about. As in the parable of Sri Ramakrishna, when a master one day develops confidence in his servant he makes him sit by his side as an equal and tells him the secrets of his life. Similarly, one should look at *sr̥ṣṭi* as a means to realization. One should not run away from it saying it is unspiritual to deal with it. Rather the method is to ask: 'If these that I see as real are appearances, then what and where is the Reality behind it?' Ask further: 'Who am I? What is the purpose of my life?' Then God will whisper into your ears the secret of the Reality underlying the universe. All things superimposed on it from *agni* to *pṛthivī* are got rid off, the mist clears, and the substratum reveals itself.

He, the *sarvabhūta-antarātmā* (indwelling Self in all beings), is the catch word of this *mantra*. He is in everything including me also. Sri Ramakrishna prayed to God, 'Your name is Jagannātha, Lord and Preserver of the world. I am not out of Thy universe. So why should You not compassionately glance at my poor soul?'⁴ This is a statement of a *bhakta* or devotee. Know verily that He is the Indwelling Self of all that is perceived in this universe.

Here lies the seed of universal religion, overcoming differences of space and time. The misconception of snake in the rope has to be removed, the misconception of the individual as petty and small has to be transcended, to realize that I am the child of the Divine Mother, or I am the servant of the servants of the Lord of the universe.

(to be continued)

4. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1994), pp. 809–10.

Centenary of Ramakrishna Mission: A Message by Swami Ranganathananda

(Continued from page 580)

Swami Vivekananda's exposition of this philosophy and spirituality, in a brief expression, is given below:

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one,

or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.

I convey my love and best wishes to all the participants of the inaugural function of the Centenary of the Ramakrishna Mission in Calcutta on the 1st of May, 1997. □

Unity in Diversity

DR. K. SARADA

All religious practices, though apparently differing, consist of a supplication to God for help and are so many varied forms of human effort to take us back to our Divine Origin. By adhering to human values found in all the religions, society will become a harmony of divinely-guided individuals, travelling along roads which, though they differ, lead to the same goal. Mankind can thus build up a great society based on unity and on adherence to the divine principle of Love. The author, Dr. Sarada, is from Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh.

Broadly speaking, the whole of mankind belongs to one Religion, the Religion of Man. For all humanity 'God' is the Father (or the Mother), and all human beings are brothers and sisters. Let us recall the ancient saying, 'All roads lead to Rome'. Let us take a Hindu in a temple, a Buddhist in a pagoda, a Christian in a church, a Japanese in a Shinto shrine, or a Muslim in a mosque—all of them will be in buildings that look totally different. They will hold different books in their hands. They will dress differently, and chant their prayers in different languages. Their actions of supplication will also differ, but in the deep recesses of every heart, the words that echo will mean the same, 'God! Please help me! Grant me Freedom! Grant me Love!' This echo is the ultimate unity, that binds all humanity to one God.

The word 'religion' comes from the Greek word '*re-ligare*', meaning 'to bind' to one's origin. That is the sum and substance of all human effort in this world on the religious plane, to go back to our origin. It is our Divine Origin we seek. Some call it entering the Kingdom of Heaven, or achieving Liberation, Moksha, or Nirvana. By whatever expression one may choose to call that highest spiritual aspiration, this ultimate destination of humanity is the same. Only by adhering to the high human norms found in all the religions, only by expanding our

hearts from our narrow, polluted wells into the ocean of Divine Love, and only by the cultivation of fellow-feeling with all beings in the tradition of the great spiritual masters, can we achieve our glorious destination.

Our life in society should also conform to this spiritual basis. The individual and society are both manifestations of the one Divine Will, for that Divine Presence permeates the universe. Society should not become a discord of selfish individuals, but a harmony of divinely-guided individuals, travelling on roads which, different though they be, lead to the same goal.

Society is not a mere aggregate of human beings living in isolation, but a means for realizing the divine. A higher social concern and awareness enriches the individual consciousness. Thus, social awareness uplifts the mind of the individuals to strive for the betterment of the society as a whole, instead of accomplishing the selfish interest of an individual.

There is an incorrect belief that there is no connection between life in society, and spiritual life. The spiritual way of living is not only helpful in improving one's life in society, but actually it is essential for such an improvement. Divinity pervades society as a whole too. The divinity that pervades so-

ciety is revealed through the individuals.

With the progress of science, man imagines that he is the master of the universe and he tends to forget the divine. Although man today has gone to the moon and is exploring outer space, he is soon bound to realize that the ultimate Truth behind the universe is far beyond the reach of his mind and intelligence. The more man discovers the secrets and mysteries of the cosmos, the more he is bound to realize that 'God' is the Creator and Motivator of all creation. All religions are agreed upon this Truth. Instead of realizing his innate divinity, man is caught up in the prison-house of his ego which seeks his own material enjoyments. Greater than all the scientific and technological progress in society is the recognition of the individual as a being endowed with Divine Consciousness.

Humanity can build up a great society based on unity and on adherence to the divine principle of Love. When individuals change, society will change. When society changes, the whole world will change too. The welfare of the individual is bound up with the welfare of the world as a whole. Unity of purpose is the secret of social progress, and service to society in the right spirit is the means to promote it. All baneful influences of self-seeking can be sublimated by the awareness that all works are performed in accordance with the divine Will, for, a society in which individual are concerned about the material welfare will not be able

to achieve harmony and peace.

All prophets and incarnations proclaim the unity of Divinity and preach the cultivation of Universal Love without regard to sex, caste, creed, country or colour. Followers of great spiritual teachers, who are ignorant of the basic unifying truth in the message of their teachers, develop pride and ego and limit the scope of their own religion. Such people create great confusion and chaos through fragmented vision. Whatever one's religion may be, everyone should cultivate respect for other faiths. Finally, the ultimate proof of the unity of faiths is the awareness of the invisible Divine string that knits all humanity together and which can be experienced even by the common man praying silently in his chosen house of prayer with the correct mental disposition.

Humanity today imagines that it can know everything about nature and the universe. But of what use is this knowledge if man does not know himself? It is only when he understands himself that he will be able to know the real truth underlying the external world.

Man's inner reality cannot be known by exploring the world outside. When he turns his vision inward and realizes his divine nature, then he will acquire same-sightedness towards all beings. Out of that experience of Oneness, man will come to possess abiding Peace and supreme Bliss which is his ultimate destination. □

Look here, my son, it is He alone who can bring about any realization. Hold fast to Him. Weep and pray to Him; out of His grace He will grant you everything at the right moment. He is the master of our minds—He is the supreme Self that has come down as our Master. If He, out of His grace, but turns the mind even a little, then this very restless mind, mad as an elephant as it is, becomes calm and gets lost in *samadhi*—it gives up all attachment to worldly things once for all.

—Swami Shivananda, *For Seekers of God*, p. 186

India, Our Motherland-I

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The debt which the world owes to our Motherland is immense. Taking country with country, there is not one race on this earth to which the world owes so much as to the patient Hindu, the mild Hindu. 'The mild Hindu' sometimes is used as an expression of reproach; but if ever a reproach concealed a wonderful truth, it is in the term, 'the mild Hindu', who has always been the blessed child of God. Civilisations have arisen in other parts of the world. In ancient times and in modern times, great ideas have emanated from strong and great races. In ancient and in modern times, wonderful ideas have been carried forward from one race to another. In ancient and in modern times, seeds of great truth and power have been cast abroad by the advancing tides of national life; but mark you, my friends, it has been always with the blast of war trumpets and with the march of embattled cohorts. Each idea had to be soaked in a deluge of blood. Each idea had to wade through the blood of millions of our fellow-beings. Each word of power had to be followed by the groans of millions, by the wails of orphans, by the tears of widows. This, in the main, other nations have taught; but India has for thousands of years peacefully existed. Here activity prevailed when even Greece did not exist, when Rome was not thought of, when the very fathers of the modern Europeans lived in the forests and painted themselves blue. Even earlier, when history has no record, and tradition dares not peer into the gloom of that intense past, even from then until now, ideas after ideas have marched out from her, but every word has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it.

This national ship of ours, ye children of the Immortals, my countrymen, has been plying for ages, carrying civilisation and enriching the whole world with its inestimable treasures. For scores of shining centuries this national ship of ours has been ferrying across the ocean of life, and has taken millions of souls to the other shore, beyond all misery. But today it may have sprung a leak and got damaged, through your own fault or whatever cause it matters not. What would you, who have placed yourselves in it, do now? Would you go about cursing it and quarrelling among yourselves! Would you not all unite together and put your best efforts to stop the holes? Let us all gladly give our hearts' blood to do this; and if we fail in the attempt, let us all sink and die together, with blessings and not curses on our lips.

Can you adduce any reason why India should lie in the ebb-tide of the Aryan nations? Is she inferior in intellect? Is she inferior in dexterity? Can you look at her art, at her mathematics, at her philosophy, and answer 'yes'? All that is needed is that she should de-hypnotise herself and wake up from her age-long sleep to take her true rank in the hierarchy of nations....Our method is very easily described. It simply consists in reasserting the national life. Buddha

preached *renunciation*. India heard, and yet in six centuries she reached her greatest height. The secret lies there. The national ideals of India are RENUNCIATION and SERVICE. Intensify her in those channels, and the rest will take care of itself. The banner of the spiritual cannot be raised too high in this country. In it alone is salvation.

...hidden under the ashes of apparent death, the fire of our national life is yet smouldering and that the life of this nation is religion, its language religion, and its idea religion; and your politics, society, municipality, plague-prevention work, and famine-relief work—all these things will be done as they have been done all along here, viz. only through religion; otherwise all your frantic yelling and bewailing will end in nothing, my friend!

...mark you, if you give up that spirituality, leaving it aside to go after the materialising civilisation of the West, the result will be that in three generations you will be an extinct race; because the backbone of the nation will be broken, the foundation upon which the national edifice has been built will be undermined, and the result will be annihilation all round.

India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the spirit; not with the flag of destruction, but with the flag of peace and love, the garb of the Sannyasin; not by the power of wealth, but by the power of the begging bowl. Say not that you are weak. The spirit is omnipotent....I do not see into the future; nor do I care to see. But one vision I see clear as life before me: that the ancient Mother has awakened once more, sitting on Her throne rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace and benediction.

...let New India arise in your place. Let her arise--out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough; out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler, and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts, and from markets. Let her emerge from groves and forests, from hills and mountains.

Let us all work hard, my brethren; this is no time for sleep. On our work depends the coming of the India of the future. She is there ready waiting. She is only sleeping. Arise and awake and see her seated here on her eternal throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than she ever was—this motherland of ours. The idea of God was nowhere else ever so fully developed as in this motherland of ours, for the same idea of God never existed anywhere else. Perhaps you are astonished at my assertion; but show me any idea of God from any other scripture equal to ours; they have only clan-Gods, the God of the Jews, the God of the Arabs, and of such and such a race, and their God is fighting the Gods of the other races. But the idea of that beneficent, most merciful God, our father, our mother, our friend, the friend of our friends, the soul of our souls, is here and here alone. And may He who is the Shiva of the Shaivites, the Vishnu of the Vaishnavites, the Karma of the Karmis, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jina of the Jains, the Jehovah of the Christians and the Jews, the Allah of the Mohammedans, the Lord of every sect, the Brahman of the Vedantists, He the all-pervading, whose glory has been known only in this land—may He bless us, may He help us, may He give strength unto us, energy unto us, to carry this idea into practice.

My First Meeting with Swami Vivekananda

KUMUDBANDHU SEN

One of those fortunate to have met Swami Vivekananda and been inspired by his holy company, Kumudbandhu Sen, recounts his first meeting with Swamiji on his return from the West to Calcutta. One of the two (the other being Swami Shuddhananda) who have provided for us an eye-witness account of the memorable occasion, Kumudbandhu Sen narrates Swamiji's view of how men and women all over the world being afflicted in various ways are in need of service: 'It is necessary to preach religion in the West—the land of sense-enjoyment. And here in this country we have to spread, on the foundation of religion, their sciences, high outlook and social freedom.' Quite significant are the observations of Vijay Krishna Goswami on Swami Vivekananda: 'You are a person who is "siddhasaṅkalpa—one whose every intention shall be accomplished". And this intention is not yours; it is he [Sri Ramakrishna] who is rousing this intention within you.'

This article appeared in Udbodhan, the Bengali Journal of the Order in B.S. 1368 at pages 69–74. We are thankful to Sri Shoutir Kishore Chatterjee for the lucid translation and to the Udbodhan for giving us the permission to print the translation of the article.

I saw Swami Vivekananda for the first time in a real sense when, in 1897, he returned to Calcutta from the West. Before that I had seen him once earlier in 1890 in the vicinity of the twin temples of Sri Mani Gupta in Masjid Bari area.

I was conversing with Mani Babu, when suddenly a young man of bright brown complexion addressed him saying, 'Hello, young one¹! How are you?' Mani Gupta quickly took the dust of his feet in reverential salutation and said, 'As He, the Lord, has kept me. Are you going to Veni Ostad's² residence?' The young man answered in the affirmative and went away to take his music lessons from Veni Ostad.

I enquired of Mani Babu, 'Who is he?' He replied, 'He is that Narendranath, whom the Master used to describe as a thousand-

petalled lotus and whom he used to address as "One among the Seven Rishis".' Thereafter our conversation revolved around Swamiji. At that time the monastic names of none of them (Swamiji and his brother-monks) had become publicly known. Later, I had the good fortune of being acquainted with Swamis Yogananda, Trigunatananda, Saradananda and others at the instance of Mani Babu.

Prabhupada Vijay Krishna Goswami put up for some days at the house of Ganga Prasad Sen, the highly famous Ayurvedic physician of Kumartuli. At the behest of Goswami, a small booklet containing Swamiji's address before the Chicago Parliament of Religions and describing such things as Swamiji's oratorical powers and the unique spell he cast on the Americans, was being circulated there among the visitors. From a perusal of that booklet I came to know that Swami Vivekananda was none other than Narendranath. In that booklet mention had also been made of monasteries

1. The word used, *khoka*, literally means 'baby'.

Mani Gupta was affectionately called thus by the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

2. Ostad means an accomplished musician.

at Baranagar and Alambazar.

I became acquainted with the swamis of Baranagar Math since the middle of 1893. We were young men then. When Swamiji returned to India, we had just passed the Entrance Examination and got ourselves admitted to college. At Balaram Mandir we used to hold discussions about Swamiji with Sri Sri Maharaj³, Yogen Maharaj, Girish Babu, Purna Babu and other companions of the Master in his divine play. When huge receptions were given to Swamiji at Ramnad and Madras, descriptions of which came to light in the *Indian Mirror*, young men like us became surcharged with a tremendous inspiration and I used to go often to Balaram Mandir in the afternoon or evening and sometimes even in the morning to get news relating to Swamiji.

One day, while a discussion was going on there (at Balaram Mandir) about the reception being accorded (to Swamiji) everywhere and that no Reception Committee had yet been formed in Calcutta, the person whom the Master used to call Naren Junior⁴—he who had become an attorney—spoke out, 'Sri N.N. Ghosh in the *Indian Nation* has praised Swamiji in the highest terms. He exerts a great influence on Raja Benoy Krishna. Let us make a proposal to them and see if a Committee materializes from that quarter.'

Then efforts at forming a Reception Committee were made on all sides. The distinguished citizens of Calcutta and Sri Hiren Dutta took special interest in the matter. A proposal was mooted to offer a 'certificate of honour' to Swamiji in a meeting to be presided over by Maharaja Lakshmi Narayan Singh of Darbhanga.

Around that time, accompanied by Sri Satish Sarkar, a disciple of Sri Vijay Krishna Goswami, I once went to see Goswamiji. Goswamiji knew my late father and affec-

tionately asked me, 'Are you not the son of Prasanna?' I saw that *sankirtan* (chanting of God's name) was held at Goswamiji's place regularly in the evening and became enchanted on seeing his ecstatic dance (at such times). One day I found Goswamiji listening with rapt attention to the reading of Swamiji's Madras address and commenting now and then that everything followed precisely the line of scriptural reasoning.

When the Reception Committee was formed, I became a volunteer under the leadership of Sri Sachindra Nath Bose, a devotee. One day, when I went to Balaram Mandir at 10 a.m., he gave me a letter to be delivered to Narendra Nath Mitra and said, 'Swamiji is coming to Budge Budge. He (Narendra Mitra) should send this letter [which mentioned this news] to Sarada Maharaj.' Due to financial constraints, the Reception Committee reserved only a special first class compartment for bringing Swamiji from Budge Budge to Sealdah Station. In the evening on the day prior to Swamiji's arrival, I found Girish Babu discussing with revered Swamis Brahmananda, Yogananda and others: 'The special train will arrive early in the morning at 6 o'clock. Will there be enough gathering at that hour in this cold? We desire that the general public assemble spontaneously to welcome him.'

Revered Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) said, 'None of us should take the lead. They (the public) will take Swamiji to the house of Pashupati Nath Bose at Bagh-bazar. It would be proper for us just to observe from afar. What do you say, Master Mahasaya⁵?'

Girish Babu responded with a little despondence, 'There has been such an ovation in Madras. It will be highly shameful if en-

3. Swami Brahmananda.

4. Narendra Nath Mitra.

5. Mahendra Nath Gupta, the school-master, used to be thus called by the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, many of whom were his former students.

thusiasm and fervour do not show up on that scale among the public in our land of Bengal—in Calcutta, the capital city of India.'

At this time, Upendranath, the proprietor of the newly started publication *Basumati* came, and hearing Girish Babu's remark, said, 'You will see tomorrow that thousands of people will turn up to welcome Swamiji. Big placards have been pasted everywhere in the city of Calcutta and its suburbs and more than a lakh handbills have been distributed. All this will surely result in a sizeable gathering.'

Sachin Babu said, 'The Committee has erected two huge welcome arches, one at Sealdah—at the Harrison Road junction—and the other, in front of Ripon College [then at the site of today's Mitra Institution]. We have decorated the entire stretch of the road from the station to Ripon College with flags, flowers, leaves and creepers.'

Next morning, before day-break, when I reached the station at 5 a.m. as a volunteer, I found it was difficult to enter the platform—such a huge crowd had assembled there. All the houses on Harrison Road, right from near the statue of Krishna Das Pal, had been decorated by their residents with flags and festoons, flowers and leaves. On one side were *sankirtan* parties, hosts of monks and brahmacharins of various denominations and a vast assemblage of people. On account of our volunteers' badges, we somehow managed to keep standing, as directed by the revered Charu Chunder Mitter, on the platform in front of the location where the special compartment was to halt.

When the special train carrying Swamiji arrived, there was so much jostling by the crowd that the revered Ananda Charlu literally fell down and the volunteers somehow rescued him and took him out. Then revered Charu Chunder Mitter gave us the direction, 'Form a circle around Swamiji and escort him by following us along the way we clear for him.' Accord-

ingly, we moved along forming a circle around Swamiji. On his alighting from the compartment, I had saluted him and he had responded by saying, 'That's all right.'

As soon as Swamiji came outside, the public cheered him on all sides with slogans of victory. Charu Babu directed the coachman to unharness the horses and asked us to pull the carriage. Swamiji objected to that but Charu Babu said, 'We are welcoming you; your objection will not stand. They would with ease take you upto the Ripon College.'

Then Swamiji, bedecked with garlands, remained standing and saluted all with folded hands. Captain and Mrs. Sevier and Mr. Goodwin were seated on the phaeton. Swami Trigunatitananda, who was standing at the back of the phaeton, cheered aloud in the names of the Master and Swamiji. Near the crossing of the Amherst Street, in front of the residence of Vijay Krishna Goswamiji, the phaeton came to a stop due to the huge crowd. We then saw Goswamiji saluting Swamiji with folded hands from his second floor verandah. Swamiji also looked in his direction and returned the salute.

With great difficulty Swamiji was conducted to the narrow courtyard of the earlier Ripon College building. He was guided to a table and chair placed on a small and simple looking verandah. It was impossible to deliver a speech from there. Swamiji stood up and said in English only this much, 'I have been fascinated and delighted by your enthusiasm and welcome. It is impossible to deliver a lecture here. With my conveying my thanks to you, let this meeting be dissolved.'

As I turned back, I found that my friend, the well-known actor and playwright Aparesh Chandra, was on the verge of being crushed by the crowd. He was somehow lifted up and extricated. The young men, including us, were so charged with enthusiasm that we said, 'We will draw this phaeton upto the house of Pashupati

Nath.' As we thus went along drawing Swamiji's carriage, slowly the crowd began to thin. Swami Subodhananda was standing on one side of the road and Latu Maharaj on the other, among the crowd at a distance and were looking at Swamiji.

Swamiji asked us to stop the phaeton in front of Purna Babu's house on Cornwallis Street and told Sarada Maharaj, 'Send word to brother Purna.' Purna Babu was bathing at that time. He came out wearing wet clothes, and prostrating himself before Swamiji, said, 'I saw you from a distance at the station itself and came away to avoid being late at the office.' Swamiji said, 'Come after evening and see me.'

Shouting cheerful slogans we drew the carriage upto the house of Pashupati Bose. There too had been erected a huge welcome arch decorated with flowers. Pashupati Bose and others saluted Swamiji in front of the gate and were conducting Swamiji inside, when Swamis Brahmananda and Yogananda garlanded him. Swamiji bowed to both and said, 'As with one's guru, so with the sons of the guru.' Maharaj too replied, 'The elder brother is as respectable as one's father.' As Master Mahasaya came forward and saluted, Swamiji said, 'Oh my girl comrade!' Then as Amrita Lal Bose, the master dramatist and actor, saluted him, he said, 'Here is Vinde⁶, the lady-messenger' and made all kinds of fun with him and the others. Hutko Gopal⁷ was seated on a bench below. Swamiji saw him and said, 'Hello Hutko, I still remain the same Naren. Why do you hide there? Come here. I have not forgotten the Bengali dialect.' After ten minutes or so, Pashupati Bose and others came to take Swamiji inside.

As soon as Swamiji went upstairs, Girish Chandra put a garland around his neck and was about to salute him when

Swamiji held his hands and said, 'What is this, G.C.⁸? That will bring ill luck to me. I have carried your Ramakrishna across the seas with the shout of "Jai Ram".⁹ Looking at Swamiji, Girish Babu beamed with an exuberance of joy. He was so overwhelmed that he could hardly utter a word.

Thereafter Swamiji went to the adjoining room with Master Mahasaya and began to converse. Addressing the latter, he said, 'Master Mahasaya, in all this [conquest of the West] that you witness, I am nothing but an instrument. It is he who sent me there. And as regards our Holy Mother—I apprised her that the Master had indicated to me [to go to the West] and asked her permission and command. Through the blessings of the Mother, I could cross all hurdles with ease and become the cynosure among hosts of great scholars, persons endowed with wisdom, scientists and thousands of men and women in that land [western countries]. I realize all these as the play of our Master. I have much to say; I will tell you sometime later on. However, I am now convinced that in this country there has been enough of religious preaching; what is wanted is education. What India badly needs at present is that her masses have clean clothes to wear, have enough food to fill their stomachs, get education and earn their livelihood. Master Mahasaya, when I saw the riches of those countries, I used to think about the wretched condition of our country and felt like weeping. I recalled the stanzas from *Meghadūtā*:

The mansions of that city may well be compared with you, O cloud, there is correspondence in features: while flashes of lightning play within you, they have charmingly attired damsels moving within them; while you have the rainbow, they have their paint-

6. Vrinde, the companion of Radha, who acted as her messenger.

7. A devotee of Sri Ramakrishna.

8. Swamiji used to address Girish Ghosh as G.C.

9. Reference is to Hanuman's crossing the sea to Sri Lanka in one bound with the cry 'Jai Ram'.

*ings; you have your deep rolling rumble, they have their drums sounding forth music; you contain pellucid water within you, they have their interior bedecked with transparent gems; you soar so high, their roofs kiss the sky.*¹⁰

And in our country we have all around refuse and stench, half-naked humans—lustreless, dimsighted, illiterate men and women. Seeing them, I thought that to serve them is the religion of the day for India. Did not the Master use to say one cannot have religion on an empty stomach? My aim is precisely to preach this religion (of service). The Master protected me from all temptations in the West. And what a wonder—some of the people there had already come to know the ideas of the Master, some of them in dream. I looked upon the women there like mothers and sisters. Among them many served me like mothers and sisters. It is necessary to preach religion in the West—the land of sense-enjoyment. And here in this country we have to spread, on the foundation of religion, their sciences, high outlook and social freedom.' At this time Maharaj came and said, 'Arrangements have been made to serve you tea and refreshments.'

Swamiji said, 'Raja, I saw Vijay Babu on the way. Could you not bring him and arrange for his stay at the Math?'

Raja Maharaj said, 'Now he has many disciples, male and female. We don't have enough room to lay our beds. If he stayed alone, that would have been another matter.' Swamiji said, 'I will meet him soon.'

Knowing beforehand the day Swamiji would go to the residence of Prabhupada Vijay Krishna Goswami on Harrison Road,

I went there beforehand. I saw that a separate seat had been arranged in front of Goswamiji. Goswamiji was waiting for the appointed time specified by Swamiji. About ten to fifteen persons were present near Goswamiji at that time. But by the time Swamiji came upstairs quite a crowd assembled there. Both made prostrations to the other for a long while. Goswamiji said, 'Glory to Ramakrishna! It is he who is doing everything through you. At Dhaka, when I was engaged in worship, I saw that he was present by my side touching my body. When I go to Dakshineswar, I get to see him at Panchavati and in his room.'

I [the narrator] have seen Goswamiji doing circumambulation at Panchavati and also dancing in the room of the Master with raised arms uttering the words 'Glory to Ramakrishna'.

Swamiji said, 'I saw many such things in the West. I felt in the heart of my hearts that I am only an instrument; he is working through me.'

Goswamiji said, 'How marvellous it is! One day I went to him at Dakshineswar; not many people were there at the time. He was alone in an ecstatic mood. As soon as I prostrated myself before him, he said, "Are your worship, meditation and all that going on all right? The six passions associated with the body are great obstacles in the path of discrimination and renunciation." In reply I said, "But I have not been able to subjugate lust." Then the Master said, "What! You are taking God's name so much and yet lust has not come under control!"' Goswami said that thereafter Sri Ramakrishna touched him and uttering the words, 'Onwards ho! Be you immersed in the ocean of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss', plunged into samadhi. Goswamiji on his part felt the transmission of a power like an electric current through his body.¹¹

Swamiji said, 'That he used to transmit

10. विद्युद्वन्तं ललितवसनाः सेन्द्रचापं सचित्राः

सङ्गीताय प्रहतमुरजाः स्निग्धगम्भीरघोषम्।

अन्तस्तोयं मणिमयभुवस्तुङ्गमभ्रंलिहाग्राः

प्रासादास्त्वां तुलयितुमलं यत्र तैस्तैर्विशेषैः ॥

—Meghadūtām, Uttarameghah, 1.

11. The episode is described in the book written

power through a mere touch, I have myself experienced first-hand. My intention is to establish some Ashramas in India; presently they are being established in Madras, Calcutta and Benaras. My English friends, the Sevier couple, want to start an Ashrama at some secluded place in the Himalayas. Though on the lookout for a site, as yet none has been decided upon. They intend to found an Ashrama in the sacred Himalayas and to pass their lives there in worship and meditation. A few monks and brahmacharins will also be there to assist them. Please give your blessings—you are my

by Goswamiji during the period of his observing silence.

elder and worthy of respect like the guru—so that I can give these intentions practical shape.'

Goswamiji replied, 'You are a person who is "*siddhasaṅkalpa*—one whose every intention shall be accomplished". And this intention is not yours; it is he who is rousing this intention within you.'

After discussing this topic, they both started talking about the divine state of the Master and in course of doing that both became overwhelmed with ecstasy. Later, the two prostrated themselves before each other again and thereafter Swamiji took leave.

That divine scene continues to shine vividly in my memory even now. □

Centenary Celebrations of The Ramakrishna Mission: A Benedictory Message

(Continued from page 579)

organization. Its chief work is the spiritual transformation of man. Hence Swamiji has set for the Ramakrishna Mission a two-fold motto: *ātmano mokṣārtham, jagaddhitāya ca* ('For one's own liberation and for the welfare of the world.'). For the spiritual transformation of man Swamiji has prescribed the path of synthesis of the four yogas: Jnana, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma, represented by the well-known emblem that Swamiji himself designed for the Ramakrishna Mission.

The hundred years that the Mission has left behind may be only just a beginning compared to the great task that lies before it in the coming centuries. But the power of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda that has sustained the Mission all these years will continue to support and guide it in future also, and it will become a

progressively better channel for the flow of their grace and love to larger and larger number of people all over the world.

On the happy occasion of the inauguration of the centenary of the Ramakrishna Mission, I pray to Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swamiji for the successful completion of the function. May their blessings be on all who participate in it! □

Do you know where those who speak of the formless God make their mistake? It is where they say that God is formless only, and that those who differ from them are wrong.

—Sri Ramakrishna,
Tales and Parables, p. 172

Netaji Subhas in the Light of Swami Vivekananda

SWAMI ATMABODHANANDA

The Swami, a monk of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta, analyses in this article the influence of Swami Vivekananda's life and message on Subhas Chandra Bose whose birth centenary is being celebrated this year. An additional aspect the author has highlighted is the often-ignored central feature of Netaji's personality—his spiritual aspiration.

The Birth Centenary Year (1897–1997) of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is being celebrated all over India. On the 23rd day of January every year, people in general remember him as a freedom-fighter; politicians respect him as a great political leader; social workers look upon him as a social reformer. People from all walks of life observe this day as a holy anniversary day. However, the point is: Is he only a revolutionary, a diplomat, a social reformer, or something else too?

From his childhood Subhas Chandra Bose was inclined to spirituality. Of course he was attracted to this life through the influence of his mother Smt. Prabhavati Devi who loved to read *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. Subhas Chandra also used to read the *Gospel*. When Subhas was only six years old, Swami Vivekananda passed away from this world. As to how he came under the benign influence of Swami Vivekananda, Subhas writes in his autobiography:

One day by sheer accident I stumbled upon what turned out to be my greatest help in this crisis. A relative of mine, who was a new-comer to the town, was living next door and I had to visit him. Glancing over his books, I came across the works of Swami Vivekananda. I had hardly turned over a few pages when I realized that here was something which I had been longing for. I borrowed the books from him, brought them

home, and devoured them. I was thrilled to the marrow of my bones.¹

And day by day he grew spiritually. He used to regularly chant the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and practise Yoga and meditation. Swamiji's humanistic ideals and revolutionary talks inspired young Subhas. Although Swami Vivekananda was a sannyasi, to Subhas he was an ideal man, a rebel sannyasi.

Swamiji had once said, 'I am a voice without a form'. Subhas Chandra read *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, felt the silent inspiration of Swami Vivekananda, and determined to lead the life of a brahmacharin. In his heart resounded Swamiji's clarion call, 'Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached'. 'Subhas saw light. His inward conflict came to an end, and a new ideal inflamed his soul.'² In a letter dated 21 August 1914 to Hemanta Sarkar, Subhas wrote, 'Now I have gained spiritual power, so I do not care for anybody now. So long I was a Sannyasi in disguise, now I am going to be a full-fledged Sannyasi... and gladly accept it.'³

He always followed Vivekananda's nationalistic ideals and regarded him as the

1. *An Indian Pilgrim, Netaji's Life and Writings, Part I* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co. Ltd., 1948), p. 42.

2. S.A. Ayer, *Story of the I.N.A.*, 1972, p. 6.

3. Hemanta Sarkar, *Subhashier Sange Baro Bachar*

Soul of India. He wrote in his life story:

I was barely fifteen when Vivekananda entered my life. Then there followed a revolution within and everything was turned upside down.... Many of the questions which vaguely stirred my mind... found in him a satisfactory solution.... I had previously thought of studying philosophy... Now I thought of the path which Vivekananda had indicated.

From Vivekananda I gradually turned to his master, Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Vivekananda had made speeches, written letters, and published books which were available to the layman. But Ramakrishna who was almost an illiterate man, had done nothing of the kind. He had lived his life and left it to others to explain it.... there were books or diaries published by his disciples which gave the essence of his teachings as learnt from conversations with him. The most valuable element in these books was his practical direction regarding character-building in general and spiritual uplift in particular.... There was nothing new in his teaching, the Upanishads having taught thousands of years ago that through abandonment of worldly desires alone can immortal life be attained. The effectiveness of Ramakrishna's appeal lay, however, in the fact that he had practised what he preached, and that, according to his disciples, he had reached the acme of spiritual progress.⁴

When the desire for a guru grew stronger and stronger, Subhas with a friend of his left on a pilgrimage in the summer vacation of 1914. This took him to Benares where they were welcomed by Swami Brahmananda who knew Subhas's family very well.⁵

'Many a night, after dinner, while in

Singapore, he [Subhas] used to send his car to the Ramakrishna Mission to fetch the Swami in charge or his fellow-missionary, Brahmachari Kailasam, and spend a good two hours or so in spiritual communication before retiring into his study.... Or, late at night, he used to drive *incognito* to the Mission, there change into a priestly silk *dhoti*, shut himself up in the prayer room, rosary in hand, and spend a couple of hours in meditation.⁶ In *Subhas Chandra Bose as I Knew Him*, Mrs. Kitty Kurti writes of him, 'No doubt... a mystic, a spiritual man... a person of obvious spirituality.'⁷ This was the secret of Netaji's striking courage in the face of sudden and imminent danger and death.

Subhas Chandra also met Swami Abhedananda, the spiritual brother of Swami Vivekananda in the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math at Calcutta on 15 August 1938, and held discussions with him on different aspects of Indian culture and the subject of India's freedom.

Freedom-fighter Charu Chandra Ganguly speaking of Subhas recollects, 'Vivekananda was his ideal thought.'⁸ Subhas used to recite from Vivekananda's 'Kali the Mother':

Who dares misery love,
And hug the form of Death,
Dance in Destruction's dance,
To him the Mother comes.⁹

In daily life Subhas Chandra followed

6. S.A. Ayer, *Unto Him a Witness* (Bombay: Thacker & Co. Ltd., 1951), p. 269.

7. (Calcutta: Firma K.L.M. Pvt. Ltd. 1966), p. 3.

8. Swami Purnatmananda, '28.11.76 Tarike Charu Chandra Gangulir Sakshatkar' (Bengali); See 'Subhasher antare agun dharie diyechen Vivekananda', *Bartanian* (Bengali Daily), 23 January 1996, p. 12.

9. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 4, p. 383.

:1912-1924 (Bengali), 1946, p. 47; See: Swami Gambhirananda, *Cintanayak Vivekananda* (Bengali), (Calcutta: Udbodhan), p. 892.

4. *An Indian Pilgrim*, pp. 43-4.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-82.

the rule: 'Example is better than precept.' He was practical, not emotional. In a letter dated 20 November 1915, he wrote, 'My life is not for enjoyment, my life is a mission, a duty'¹⁰ and held, 'there is also the joy and glory of struggle, and ultimate victory.'¹¹

On the method used by Subhas, Romain Rolland wrote in his Diary:

...he [Subhas] does not consider terrorism as a truly political method and he is for an organized non-cooperation which does not exclude violence and he is well resolved to use it in struggle; the big question is how to get the masses interested in this struggle.¹²

And according to Mahatma Gandhi,

The greatest lesson that we can draw from Netaji's life is the way in which he infused the spirit of unity amongst his men so that they could rise above all religious and provincial barriers and shed together their blood for the common cause.¹³

Subhas Chandra is a great political leader no doubt, but he was influenced by Swamiji's ideals: 'Man-making religion', 'Character-building' and 'Service to man in the spirit of worship of God'. He wrote,

I took politics not as a job, but as a service to man, i.e. to remove bondage of mother-India, and India is my meditation, worship, Sadhana.¹⁴

If we serve man that will be worship of God. Because God is in everything indeed. So by

service to man, one can reach the highest salvation and raise oneself to the stage of godliness. This service was the motto of Subhas Chandra's life, and that was his religion. Through service to mankind Subhas wanted nation building, national reconstruction which is in tune with what Swami Abhedananda said on the doctrine of *Karma*:

The ultimate aim of life will be served if we can discharge the debt which we owe to our own selves. If we keep this idea ever in our mind as we work in the family, in the society, or in the state, we shall work without seeking any result, whether personal glory, wealth or even moral satisfaction; and all work performed in this spirit will purify our souls from selfishness, hatred, jealousy and anger.¹⁵

In a letter dated 23 March 1920 to Charu Chandra Ganguly, Netaji expressed his deep faith in Swamiji's ideals thus:

Swami Vivekananda used to say that India's progress will be achieved only by the peasant, the washerman, the cobbler and the sweeper. These words are very true.... If India will ever rise again, that will come through the power of the people.¹⁶

Swamiji's voice often echoed in Netaji's speeches. In the midst of a gathering at Pune, Netaji said:

My Master Swami Vivekananda said, 'Freedom! Freedom is the song of the soul. Freedom is the real Amrita.'¹⁷

Subhas Chandra was deeply inspired by this utterance and he dedicated his whole life to

(Continued on page 608)

10. Subhas Chandra Basu, *Patravali 1912-1932*, (Bengali), (Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar & Sons Pvt. Ltd., 1968), p. 65.

11. *The Indian Struggle (1920-42)*, ed. Sisir Kumar Bose, (Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1981); See *Bartaman* (Bengali Daily), 23 January 1996, p. 10.

12. *Bartaman* (Bengali Daily), 23 January 1996, p. 9.

13. *Netaji: His Life and Work*, ed. Ram Sharma (Agra: Shivalal Agarwala & Co. Ltd., 1948), p. iii.

14. Samar Guha, *Netajir Swapna O Sadhana* (Calcutta: Calcutta Book House, 1970), p. 52.

15. *Doctrine of Karma* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1989), p. 79.

16. Subhas Chandra Basu, *Taruner Swapna* (Calcutta: Sriguru Library, 1945), p. 93.

17. Pranabesh Chakravarti, *Viswavani*, (Bengali Sakha) Aswin 1402, p. 317; Also see 'Swami Vivekananda'—Subhas Chandra Basu, *Jugantar* (Bengali Daily), 10 January 1996, p. 7.

Satyagraha: A Way of Life

L. THOMPSON WOLCOTT

Something needs to be told about the author in his own words. He lived in India and twice met Mahatma Gandhi when he came to his town to hold 'prayer meetings'. He also participated in a Gandhi memorial prayer meeting with Hindu and Muslim religious leaders. He had visited Gandhi's secretary at Sevagram after the tragic death of Gandhi. He toured India, lecturing at universities and civic clubs, preparing for the World Peace Conference held in Gandhi's memory in Calcutta. He was intimate with Mahatma Gandhi's son, Manilal, and exchanged letters with him. A student of the Bhagavad Gita, and well read on Gandhi, non-violence and satyagraha, the author in this enriching article brings out the inner essence of satyagraha, as a way of life suited to usher a new world order.

There are great words, conveying great ideals with universal application, whose meaning we neglect. We use them commonly, narrowly, and forget their full significance. We need to look back from time to time to rediscover them. Such a word is *satyāgraha*.

We remember its first appearance in 1907 in a movement of civil disobedience, non-cooperation with the South African Government's 'Asiatic Registration Act'. The young lawyer from India, Mohandas K. Gandhi, coined a word to characterize the movement. *Satyagraha* would define and at the same time empower the movement. It would affect not only the agents of oppression but also the oppressed.

What is *satyagraha*? Its meaning grew as Gandhi pondered over his experiences, then and later in India through major civil disobedience campaigns in 1920–22, 1930–32 and 1940–42.

Subsequently its meaning has often become diluted in popular usage. One Hindi dictionary defines it simply as 'civil disobedience, passive resistance'. In the 1920s, when Gandhi's *satyagraha* came to prominence, some writers applied it loosely to earlier reform movements in India.

While Gandhi was undergoing his last

satyagraha fast, hoping to influence the Hindu and Muslim communities to cooperate, a group of students began their own '*satyagraha* fast', as they called it. They sat in front of the house where Gandhi was fasting and they refused food, vowing to fast until Gandhi would call off his campaign.

When India had won its independence without violence and had its own army and after Gandhi was killed by violence, one who had been his follower in pre-independence days said, '*Satyagraha* was only a means we used because we had no arms and no power. Now we have arms and power. We no longer need *satyagraha*.'

Many consider *satyagraha* but a strike, although without violence, to achieve social ends or simply for expressing any grievance or for any purpose when other means are lacking. If the goal of the strike is achieved—higher pay, perhaps, or better working conditions or easier examinations—the *satyagraha* is called off, mission accomplished!

Satyagraha, however, as the theme of Mahatma Gandhi's life of selfless action, was not a temporary expediency. It meant more than civil disobedience, non-cooperation, passive resistance, or non-harming. To him it came to mean an attitude, a nature, a

life discipline affecting one's own being and all human relationships.

Remember the two words Gandhi put together: *satya* and *āgraha*. *Satya*, cognate to *sat*, which signifies 'being, essence, reality', connotes 'integrity, the quality of goodness, probity, virtue, sincerity, veracity, that which is faithful and pure, without defect'. It corresponds to words used in modern Indian vernaculars that mean 'that which is right, true, virtuous, real, genuine'.

Āgraha means 'firmness, persistence, enduring', even 'obstinate insistence'. The combination of these two words says of the *satyāgrahi* (one who practises *satyagraha*) that he will persist in unshakable loyalty to the goal of justice and rightness he believes in and he can be trusted not to deviate from faithfulness to what he considers the ultimate truth in human relations. His integrity of behaviour can be counted on. He will not stop from veracity to gain his ends but will be strictly honest with himself and with any opponent. The means (*satyagraha*) in fact characterizes the end. Thus, Gandhi combined the Hindu concept of the essence of being with the social goals of modern man.

Satyagraha, firmness in, or persistence in, or insistence on, truth meant, for Gandhi, refusal to compromise with evil under any circumstances. It meant to act out what one believes to be right even if that meant resistance to man-made laws which are contrary to or violate that rightness.

Gandhi understood the highly regarded but usually neglected teaching in the 'Sermon on the Mount' about the right response in human relations. To persecuted believers Jesus says, 'Resist not him that is evil...whoever smites you on the right cheek turn to him the other also.... Love your enemies...and pray for them that persecute you' (Cf. *Matthew*, 5:39, 44).

Gandhi also searched the inner significance of *ahimsa* and extended the general understanding of it, 'non-violence', as an essential element of *satyagraha*.

A group of friendly soldiers entered the compartment of a train I was riding one night. They were on their way to war maneuvers. They carried guns with fixed bayonets, holding them between their knees. A cockroach scuttled out from among their luggage and ran across the floor. I pulled my rucksack out of its way. One of the soldiers held up his hand and cautioned with a smile: 'Don't kill! Don't kill! *Ahimsa!*' He sat there with bayoneted gun in hand, ready to kill human beings in defense of his country. But he believed in *ahimsa*, non-violence.

During the Hindu-Muslim strife at the time of partition of Pakistan and India, a refugee who had lost house and family, explained it, 'Our Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita says: "If you are a soldier in battle strike to kill your enemy. That is your duty (*dharma*). Do your duty with all your might but do it without motive, without hatred, without passion, without emotion, without fear or favour, without caring about the results."'

Ahimsa is typically thought of as passively indifferent non-harming. Such non-emotional detachment avoids anger and passion.

Gandhi's *satyagraha*, however, went further as active concern for the 'enemy'. He even spoke of *ahimsa* as love for the enemy. It has an end in view. It has a goal: to change society and to change the attitudes that permit injustice in society. This means: to change the perpetrator of injustice rather than to punish him.

Gandhi was convinced that violence is a clumsy weapon which creates more problems than it solves, and leaves hatred and bitterness as lingering obstacles to reconciliation. *Satyagraha* was not designated to vanquish opponents but to effect a climate in which appeal could be made to the conscience of the opponent and thus convert him to goodwill, bringing about a settlement honourable to *both* parties.

Such a response, the ability to avoid

anger, bitterness, and retaliation can only be possible, Gandhi advised repeatedly, through prayer and trust in God.

Hindu tradition provided mental poise and self-control. Anyone, who seriously seeks salvation, Hindu scriptures say, must practise self-restraint, renunciation, patience, deep concentration, and faith.

The practice of *satyagraha*, therefore, needed preparation. This included self-examination, a willingness to acknowledge mistakes and failures. This preparation might include fasting, which Gandhi did often. It required self-denial and simplicity of life-style. It had to prepare one for suffering without complaint.

Together with purity in one's personal life, Gandhi demanded of his followers service to people in need. He would sometimes pull his *satyagrahis* away from active civil disobedience to participate for a while in active aid to people who, like the outcasted *harijans*, were victims of social injustice.

The *satyagrahi* persists in pursuing the dual goal of overcoming an unjust social situation and at the same time reconciling the enemy. It becomes an experience in double exposure.

Thus, the battle for India freedom was

waged on a moral and on a psychological front. The British conscience Gandhi knew well and he had a certain empathy with the British mind. Empathy with the antagonist, then, allows one to understand *why* the enemy acts as he does, and to speak to his motives and to appeal to the best in him.

Gandhi went so far as to recommend that his followers 'trust the word of the enemy' as far as possible. 'The basis of *satyagraha*,' he declared, 'is to be found in faith in human nature. It consists in the faith that it is possible to change the most wicked of men' (Quoted in the diary of his secretary, Mahadev Desai).

In time, *satyagraha* came to mean, for Gandhi, a total life of self-discipline. It was abandonment of creature comfort and security for the sake of dedicated service to humanity. This was his definition of purity. Although perfection in the practice of *satyagraha* might belong to only a few, it was to be expected of all. *Satyagraha*, as an ultimate weapon, was to be a *way of life* and as such becomes the only hope, the only means now existing in all the world among people of every persuasion for effecting the transformation to a 'humanity without violence'. □

CORRECTIONS

JANUARY 1997 ISSUE

P. 64, Column 2: 'Buckinghamshire—1948' should read 'Buckinghamshire—1934'.

P. 91, Column 2, Under Trabuco Canyon, California: 'Property transferred 1947' should read 'Property transferred 1949'.

MARCH 1997 ISSUE

P. 323, Review of the book *Vivekananda: East Meets West*, Column 2: Line 6: '(1) that there is already a sweet union between the East and the West' should read '(1) that there is a sweet union of the East and the West in Swami Vivekananda'. Line 16: '1. A Sweet Union between East and West' should read '1. East Meets West in Swami Vivekananda'.

An Ardent Wish

KALYANI BOSE

Of all the blessings I received so far
One outshines the rest
In vivid glory and striking grace
It is by far the best.

The sacred privilege to be born, O Mother!
as a daughter of the beloved land of gods
Where the stars, the moon, the rising sun
All sing the glory of the Divine One.
Where trees and rivers and distant hills
Dance in the rhythm of heavenly bliss
Where every bird catches its lilt
From the fountain of the Eternal Hymn!

Your undulating fields, your grassy glades,
Far away call from an unknown shepherd,
Scorching sun on a summer noon,
Tingling bells of a grazing herd!
What big a lump they bring to my throat,
What pang from fervent nostalgic thoughts!
Could ever the comforts of a western world
Put all of them to a naught!

Your serene evenings, your age-old chores,
Smell of dust and sweat of folks,
Your homebound birds and cattle in ravine,
They are *mine!* they *are* mine!! they are *all* mine!!!
On your bosom I came a thousand times
I suckled your breasts with tender lips
I clutched your hair with tiny hands
I played at your yard a thousand tricks!

If I am ever to be born again, O Mother!
Grant me one last ardent wish,
Amidst your rivers and hills and dales
Grant me a place to grow and flourish.
To touch and taste, to hear and smell
Your earth and water, your songs and scent
To dance and sing and play and laugh
And peacefully sleep at journey's end!

* The author is an NRI living in the United States of America for the last fifteen years.

Reviews and Notices

GOD WHO WALKED ON EARTH: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SHIRDI SAI BABA; Rangaswami Parthasarathy; publ. Sterling Paperbacks, Sterling Publishers P. Ltd., L-10 Green Park Extn., New Delhi 110 016; 1996; pp. 230; Rs. 95/-.

This book is a loving tribute to the simplicity and greatness of a truly enlightened soul—the Sai Baba of Shirdi—by a devoted disciple, Rangaswami Parthasarathy. Shirdi Sai Baba was revered as a God, as an avatar, by people from all strata of society. Sai Baba's teachings were based upon secular and humanitarian ideals. The available material about Sai Baba came through ballad singers and discourses by itinerant entertainers. The real biographer of Sai Baba, however, was Narasimha Swamiji. Rangaswami Parthasarathy's book is based on the writings of Narasimha Swamiji, and Hemadpant's *Sai Satcharita*, which is an authentic source material on the life and times of Baba. The book has a foreword by Swami Harshananda. It is divided into 12 chapters with a bibliography at the end. The book deals with the life of Sai Baba, and narrates the miraculous experiences of his devotees.

Sai Baba's greatness lay in his eclectic approach to life. Baba insisted that mere external conversion into religion was meaningless. Conversion of the heart which led to spiritual enlightenment and God was his ideal for mankind. As a devotee aptly remarked, 'The eminence of Baba as a saint is not in his striking out a new line of thought or expounding a new philosophy or religious system. His greatness consists in drawing to himself men without any faith or adequate faith in their own ancient systems' (p. 134). An inculcation of the virtues of love, tolerance, patience, industry, and total submission to the will of God were the keystones of his philosophy. The book gives extensive illustrations of the positive changes induced in those who came into contact with Baba.

This book is a rich storehouse of spirituality illuminating thoughts and incidents. The simplicity and lucidity of the language is an added advantage. In today's world of intolerance and fundamentalism, such books are invaluable and indispensable.

*Dr. Rama Nair
Secunderabad*

THE BOOK OF LIFE; Roy Eugene Davis; publ. Motilal Banarsidass, 41 U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, New Delhi 110 007; 1993; pp. 157; Rs. 65/-.

The Book of Life as its sub-title claims is 'Everyone's Commonsense Guide to purposeful living and spiritual growth into the 21st century and Beyond'. It is written by Roy Eugene Davis, a direct personal disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda, and a world-travelled teacher of meditation practices and spiritual growth processes. The book has an Introduction, followed by eight chapters, and a thought-provoking index. The book deals comprehensively and practically with the process of spiritual evolution that is possible and attainable in this world itself. The author attempts to convince us that we can successfully relate to the present, and prepare for the future by awakening and realizing our innate spiritual consciousness. Spiritual growth can be achieved by passing through seven broad categories of soul-awareness referred to as 'the seven stages of unfoldment'. There is an interesting analysis of the 'seven vital centres in the subtle body and corresponding states of consciousness'. The highest centre is the 'Crown Chakra' located in the upper brain, and related to total spiritual freedom. The lowest is the 'Base Chakra' located at the bottom of the spinal pathway, and related to instinctive behaviour and attachments.

The process of spiritual liberation is possible by refining and regulating our natural desires. It is 'not one of escape from reality, but a more comprehensive realization of it' (p. 65). The author stresses the importance of meditation and prayer as a practical mode through which spiritual realization can be achieved. Similar ideas have been dealt with by many writers in the past. But this book stands out because of the commitment and sincerity of the writer. A noteworthy feature is the graded sections on 'Practical Application' which help the seeker to arrive at the process of self-transformation through surrendered and devotion to God. The language is simple and forthright, and the message is clear. Only an expanded state of awareness can help one in dispassionately performing one's 'Wisdom-guided' service for the sake of others. It is a book that is sure to provide the right spiritual guidance to those who seek it.

Dr. Rama Nair

VALUES, THE KEY TO A MEANINGFUL LIFE; A *Vedanta Kesari* Presentation; publ. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 600 004; 1996; pp. 220; Rs. 30/-.

Situated in the vortex of the hopes and frustrations of present-day corruption, insincerity, callousness and red-tapism, people have become conscious about value erosion and the need to restore value awareness. But what are the values? What does one gain by living value-oriented life? What do we gain by knowing about the different values people cherish in various parts of the world? How shall we utilize these to make for an ordered society—national and international? These are some of the probable questions a thinking person is confronted with and the annual number of the monthly journal *Vedanta Kesari*, spotlighting the theme of 'Value', tries to answer these questions by inviting articles dealing with 'Values' in different fields of human endeavour. The overwhelming enthusiastic welcome to this theme of immense contemporary relevance compelled the publishers to give the contents in a book version and this small book took shape.

The articles are grouped in fifteen sections representing fifteen fields. They are: Society, Family, Education, Administration, Law, Law Enforcement, Music, Cinema, Journalism, Literature, Medicine, Science & Technology, Industry, Business and Sports.

There is an impressive range of contributors: H.H. Dalai Lama puts stress on compassion, generosity and concern for others. Pravrajika Vrajaprana traces the history of Native Americans and shows that their much cherished values like silence, truthfulness, patience, endurance, self-control and prayer had given them strength to endure the treatment of brutality and injustice meted out to them. Availability, positive and compassionate attitude and patience are the values which are to be sought in a real sadhu—highlights Swami Vidyatmananda. According to Nivedita Bhide, re-vitalizing our family system by inculcating value sense in the growing children is the only way to strengthen India, while Hedi and Nik Bosten analyse existing family values against the background of Vedanta philosophy. Aasha Reddy believes that integrity, confidence, determination, self-reliance, love, contentment, laughter, compassion, interest in reading, discipline and strong religious faith—these are the values that a family should strive for. Throwing light on our spiritual tradition Swami Gautamananda insists on the education based on concentration, chastity, truthfulness, *tapas*, a

taste for bodily exercise, pure love, prayer and *shraddha*. Pierrettee Mohan stresses the importance of developing their favourite French values—freedom, equality and solidarity. The entire administration system should be transparent, devoid of corruption or partiality and must incessantly work for the eradication of poverty, says D.K. Oza. Charles Mitchell reflecting on values in Law rightly observes, 'the reality of values is that they are weak governors of conduct unless they are the kind of inner law obeyed by Gandhi and Thoreau, Christ and Ramakrishna' (p. 111). The importance of moral values in the judiciary as well as in the police force is highlighted by Palkhiwala and Ribero. Pravrajika Varadaprana and Swami Veetamohananda talk about the transforming power of music. To Alan Arkin, relationship with co-workers should be the most important thing for an artist. A journalist should always search for inspiring stories amidst the crimes scandals and other reports, observes Guy E. Olsen; whereas Jean-Marc Ohlmann candidly remarks that a Vedanta student working in journalism can look upon information as the ever-changing deceitful mask of *maya*. For Barbara Dana, writing about hope, humour, power of love and heroism is the medium of reaching children. Dr. B. Ramamurthi traces the importance of moral values in medical profession and Dr. William Pullen's professional life is sustained and salvaged by his spiritual beliefs. Fidelity in scientific research, freedom of exchange of information among scientists and a passion for truth are presented as values for science with illustration by Dr. N.V.C. Swamy. Vedantic values like unity in diversity, karma yoga, openness are the basis of their flourishing business, say K.C. Shroff and Dough Rauch. Lastly, to R. Mohan, sports teaches the individual to subjugate his selfish interests to those of the team and thus, gives a code for life itself.

The Editorial and Swami Bhajanananda's thoughtful analysis on 'Value, Yoga and Reality' have positively embellished the book. The Editorial makes explicit the concept of value, its classification, how value system can bring about social change and makes clear the aim and scope of the book. Swami Bhajanananda offers some conceptual clarification regarding values: the Vedantic vision of Brahman—the cosmic principle that underlies the universe and which is eternal, untouched by the vagaries and vicissitudes of time—as the source of values and importance of yoga in preparing a person to live a value-oriented life.

A careful study of the book undoubtedly clears one's perception about values, their value and implications. The articles trigger our own

thoughts, reactions and creative ideas. This very timely publication will surely help in developing a strong value system and show the path for meaningful living. A valuable publication true to

the tradition of *Vedanta Kesari*.

Dr. Chetana Mandavia
Junagadh

Ramakrishna Movement: Ideas and Ideals-II

(Continued from page 566)

reminded of crystallization which is a two-step process: First, nucleation in which nuclei for crystal growth are generated, and the second, crystal growth on these nuclei. This idea as applied to education was presented by Swamiji himself when, after stressing the need for a temple, he said:

...in connection with this temple there should be *an institution to train teachers who must go about preaching religion and giving secular education to our people; they must carry both. As we have been already carrying religion from door to door, let us along with it carry secular education also. That can be easily done. Then the work will extend through these bands of teachers and preachers, and gradually we shall have similar temples in other places, until we have covered the whole of India. That is my plan.*⁸

Thus, what is needed are men with a vision, with an insight to alleviate the misery of mankind, men who are themselves fired with the lofty ideals for which the Movement stands, men who, willing to sacrifice

their all for the cause of redemption of humankind seeing in them so many forms of the divine, dedicate their individual life for the attainment of the one goal of human life.

Once Revered Swami Tapasyanandaji told a devotee that preaching was not the work of monks only and that even devotees could participate in that. On being asked what a humble devotee himself seeking light could do, the Swami suggested that he could keep the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda-Vedanta literature in a library at his house and share it with friends, clearly pointing out to him that if there was a will, there certainly was a way too. The same Swami on another occasion narrated the three essentials of every monastic order: Love of chastity, love of poverty and missionary zeal. When the Swami was asked what he meant by the term 'missionary zeal', he replied crisply, 'Well, I will define missionary zeal as *sharing the best you have with others.*' Today every devotee, every one who is inspired by the lofty ideals of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji, needs to manifest that kind of missionary zeal. □

8. C.W., vol. 3, p. 303.

Cry! Cry! Can He be realized through spiritual practice? How much power has man? What can he do in order to be worthy of the grace of God? Nothing. Be at peace by surrendering yourself to Him. Take refuge in Him. He will certainly accept you at His feet. It is impossible to realize Him without His grace.

—Swami Shivananda, *For Seekers of God*, p. 144

CENTENARY CELEBRATION RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, SARGACHI

The Centenary Celebration of Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Sargachi, was observed with due solemnity, enthusiasm and joy. A colourful procession from the present campus to Mahula where a century ago Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, had started a relief work, was taken out. To commemorate the auspicious day of the arrival of Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj at Mahula, Sri Sri Annapurna Puja in the image was performed on 15 April 1997. Swami Nisprihanandaji Maharaj inaugurated the celebration by lighting a hundred lamps (*pradipas*). Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji

Maharaj, Swami Lokeswaranandaji Maharaj, Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj and Sri Asit Kumar Chattopadhyay delivered their speeches before the religious congregation on 17 April. An attractive centenary souvenir brought out on this occasion was released that day by Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj. One hundred and twelve monks and brahmacharins from Ramakrishna Math, Belur and its other branch centres as well as a large number of villagers and devotees participated in this celebration. In connection with this celebration Swami Lokeswaranandaji Maharaj spoke in the Rabindrasadan auditorium of Berhampore on 18 April 1997. □

Netaji Subhas in the Light of Swami Vivekananda

(Continued from page 600)

the task of liberating India from the clutches of alien rule and raising his countrymen from the abyss of ignorance, poverty, social injustice and other evils. He inspired thousands with the call, 'Give me your blood and I will give you freedom.'¹⁸

Today if we follow the ideal of serving

18. *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Government of India, 1962.

man as set forth before us by Swamiji and Netaji, that will be the most fitting tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra and only then will his centenary celebration be really fruitful. Otherwise, it will fizzle out as an empty ritual without leaving any impact upon the masses in general. His centenary celebration should therefore be observed solemnly and sincerely in this spirit. □

The formless aspect of the Lord is easy to comprehend but the Incarnation aspect is very difficult to understand. In the latter there is the display of various acts, comprehensible and incomprehensible, causing mental confusion even in holy sages.

—Lala Kannoo Mal, *The Sayings of Tulsidas*, p. 35